National Library of Canada
Canadian Theses Service
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Services des thèses canadiennes

CANADIAN THESES

THÈSES CANADIENNES

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30.

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

NL-339 (r. 86/06)

Canada

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Narrative Techniques in Contemporary German Women's Literature

by

Anthony D. Phillips

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Master of Arts in German Literature

Department of Germanic Languages

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Fall 1986

Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

ISBN 0-315-32373-6

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR Anthony D. Phillips

TITLE OF THESIS Narrative Techniques in Contemporary German Women's Literature

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED Master of Arts in German Literature

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED Fall 1986

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(SIGNED) A. Phillips

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

21 Edinburgh Drive,
Oswaldtwistle, Accrington,
Lancs. BB5 3AR ENGLAND.

DATED Sept. 22nd 1986

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Narrative Techniques in Contemporary German Women's Literature submitted by Anthony D. Phillips in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in German Literature.

Holger Pausch
Supervisor

Date Sept. 22, '86

Dedication

For Susan Margaret Hope

Abstract

This thesis attempts to further the discussion regarding feminine style in prose-writing by analysing the works of four feminist writers (Verena Stefan, Brigitte Schwaiger, Eva Zeller, and Ingeborg Drewitz) in the light of their use of certain narrative techniques.

The first chapter considers the most common approach to the question of feminine aesthetics, namely, the development of various thematic trends. It discusses the problems encountered when attempting to ascertain whether or not a feminine style can be said to exist on the basis of this kind of thematic study. The diversity of theme and the fact that male literature has also made use of some of the thematic categories mentioned seem to suggest, however, that a different perspective is necessary to explain the characteristics peculiar to women's literature. For this reason the discourse focuses on two stylistic tendencies in feminist literature.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the question of tense use in contemporary *Frauenliteratur*, with particular reference to the apparent turn towards extensive present-tense narration. Chapter 2 examines the traditional approach to tense by both critics and authors, and chapter 3, which is divided into two sections (first- and third-person texts), analyses the selected works, illustrating the anomalous tense use, considering the possible reasons for this, and discussing its effects.

In the fourth chapter the discussion takes up the second aspect of narrative technique which indicates a divergence from tradition, namely, the area of consciousness presentation. This chapter establishes that although feminist writers employ the usual techniques, such as interior monologue and "erlebte Rede," in order to portray the psyches of their characters, the application of these stylistic devices is restricted almost exclusively to the female protagonists. The various effects of this procedure are then considered and evaluated.

Chapter 5 discusses the combined effect of the above phenomena, and evaluates the advantages of this type of structural approach in the debate concerning feminine narrative style.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at Manchester Polytechnic for stimulating my interest in modern German literature, and would also like to thank Dr. Holger Pausch of the Department of Germanic Languages at the University of Alberta for his advice and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis.

Table of Contents

Chapter		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Traditional Tense Use	18
	2.1 The Linguistic Approach to Tense	18
	2.2 The Question of Time and Tense in Literature	20
	2.2.1 The Epic Preterite	21
	2.2.2 Present-tense Narration	24
3.	Tense use in "Frauenliteratur"	29
	3.1 First-person texts - Verena Stefan and Brigitte Schwaiger	31
	3.1.1 Verena Stefan: Häutungen	31
	3.1.2 Brigitte Schwaiger: Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer	40
	3.2 Third-person texts - Eva Zeller and Ingeborg Drewitz	46
	3.2.1 Eva Zeller: Die Hauptfrau	46
	3.2.2 Ingeborg Drewitz: Das Hochhaus	52
	3.3 A review of tense in "Frauenliteratur"	56
4.	The Presentation of Consciousness in "Frauenliteratur"	59
5.	Conclusion	66
6.	Bibliography	70
	6.1 Primary Literature	70
	6.2 Secondary Literature	71

1. Introduction

> There is no reason to think that the form of the epic or of the poetic play suit a woman any more than the sentence suits her. But all the older forms of literature were hardened and set by the time she became a writer. The novel alone was young enough to be soft in her hands another reason, perhaps, why she wrote novels. Yet who shall say that even now 'the novel' (I give it inverted commas to mark my sense of the words' inadequacy), who shall say that even this most pliable of all forms is rightly shaped for her use? No doubt we shall find her knocking that into shape for herself when she has free use of her limbs; and providing some new vehicle, not necessarily in verse, for the poetry in her. For it is the poetry that is still denied outlet.[1]

The recent increase in the literary production of women, both in Germany and elsewhere, has provoked widespread discussion regarding the question "gibt es eine weibliche Asthetik?"[2] For the most part this discussion has focused on women's prose style in order to ascertain whether it contains any clearly definable feminine traits. During the course of the following analysis I will attempt to further this discussion by examining certain stylistic elements of feminist prose in this respect. Yet before dealing specifically with the question of narrative techniques used in this genre, it will be useful to consider briefly the concept of "*Frauenliteratur*" and its development within the broader context of contemporary German literature.

As Sigrid Weigel points out in her recent survey of women's literature, the concept of "*Frauenliteratur*" is perhaps the most controversial issue in contemporary German literature.[3] Much of this controversy arises from the fact that the term itself originally took on a perjorative meaning in connection with the sentimental novels written by women in the nineteenth century. The use of the label "*Frauenliteratur*" to describe the more recent works by women therefore leads to a certain discomfort.[4]

---

[1] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929; rpt. London: Grafton Books, 1985), p. 74.

[2] Quoted from the title of the renowned essay by Silvia Bovenschen, Uber die Frage: Gibt es eine weibliche Asthetik?" *Asthetik und Kommunikation*, 25 (September 1976), pp. 60-75; rpt. in *Die Uberwindung der Sprachlosigkeit: Texte aus der neuen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Gabriele Dietze (Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1979), pp. 82-115.

[3] Sigrid Weigel, "'Woman Begins Relating to Herself': Contemporary German Women's Literature," *New German Critique*, 31 (Winter 1984), p. 53.

[4] A note from the editor of Sigrid Weigel's study also suggests the additional factors of a "strong elitist-aristocratic heritage within German literary criticism" and "the relative marginality of West German feminist culture" as having contributed to

The uneasiness which the term "*Frauenliteratur*" produces with reference to modern women's literature is exemplified by the variety of alternative terminology suggested by critics and theoreticians in their recent analyses of the genre. They include "*neue Literatur der Frauen*" (Heinz Puknus), "*feministische Literatur*" (Renate Möhrmann), and "*neue Frauenliteratur*" (Evelyn Torton Beck and Biddy Martin), to name but a few.

In addition to this variety in terminology, it becomes clear, when one considers the reasons given by individuals for their particular choice of phrase, that opinions on this matter are no less diverse than the terms themselves. The following examples illustrate some of the different approaches taken by certain critics to the difficult and delicate task of providing a suitable label for this relatively recent literary movement. Renate Möhrmann expresses her reasons for preferring the term "*feministische Literatur*" by drawing a comparison with the terminology applied to films made by women from an emancipatory viewpoint ("der feministische Film"), as opposed to films simply about and for women ("der Frauenfilm"). She says:

> Analog dazu lässt sich zwischen Frauenliteratur und feminstischer Literatur differenzieren, wenn auch nicht in bezug auf ihre Autorschaft . . . als vielmehr hinsichtlich ihrer thematischen Akzentuierungen. Feministische Literatur ist provokative Literatur und steht quer zum Status quo. Sie gehört zu dem grossen Komplex der "littérature engagée". Doch ihr Engagement konzentriert sich vornehmlich auf die Frau. Darin liegt ihre Geschlechtsspezifität, nicht notgedrungen in ihrer Verfasserschaft.[5]

Evelyn Torton Beck and Biddy Martin, on the other hand, carefully point out that it is not their aim to create a fictitious notion according to which all texts written by women since 1970 "[sich] harmonisch auf einen Nenner bringen liessen."[6] Whereas Ricarda Schmidt feels that feminists can reclaim the term "*Frauenliteratur*" and develop it so as to force a re-evaluation of it. She states:

---

[4](cont'd) the degree of discussion the phenomenon *Frauenliteratur* has caused since the mid-1970s.

[5] Renate Möhrmann, "Feministische Trends in der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur," in *Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur. Ausgangspositionen und aktuelle Entwicklungen*, ed. Manfred Durzak (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), p. 338.

[6] Evelyn Torton Beck and Biddy Martin, "Westdeutsche Frauenliteratur der siebziger Jahre," in *Deutsche Literatur in der Bundesrepublik seit 1965*, eds. Paul Michael Lützeler and Egon Schwarz (Königstein/Ts: Athenäum Verlag, 1980), p. 135.

> Diesen diskriminierenden Begriff können Feministinnen . . . für sich reklamieren, indem sie - wie viele Unterdrückte, die beginnen, sich aufzulehnen - das Schimpfwort selbstbewusst akzeptieren und dadurch die Anerkennung jener Normen verweigern, durch die der Begriff "Frauenliteratur" zuerst geprägt wurde.[7]

In recognising the problems caused by the terminology, I will, for the purpose of the following analysis of certain aspects of narrative technique, consciously use the term "*Frauenliteratur*," since I feel that, as a result of its more general nature, it is the most appropriate label for the wide variety of texts in this genre, and also because, on the basis of the argument put forward here by Ricarda Schmidt, it seems that the ever-increasing popularity of this literary phenomenon has gone a long way towards forcing a re-appraisal of the term. Furthermore, whilst remaining aware of its previous perjorative sense, I feel it important not to translate the term (thus avoiding yet more problems), since I am concerned with the specifically German phenomenon, and this, moreover, within the tradition of German-speaking literature.

As far as labelling the genre is concerned, therefore, opinions are many and varied, yet this question, although important, is not as problematic as the ensuing discussion regarding the definition of the texts which are subsumed here. For, in using a specific term to categorise the works of certain women writers, usually of the post-1968 era, a distinction is made between it and other literary genres. This distinction has been ambiguous ever since it was first made. The reason for this ambiguity is the fact that the distinctive features have, to my knowledge, never been satisfactorily explained, since most attempts to specify the distinguishing characteristics of women's prose have tended to concentrate on inconclusive thematic differences between male and female texts. It appears, however, that the essential differences between *Frauenliteratur* and other styles of writing cannot be determined merely by considering such superficial elements as content, or, of course, the gender of the author.

From numerous attempts to discover and define the distinctive features of texts classed as *Frauenliteratur*, it has so far only been possible for critics to put together a vague

---

[7] Ricarda Schmidt, *Westdeutsche Frauenliteratur in den siebziger Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: R.G. Fischer, 1982), p. 3.

conglomeration of extremely general features, such as form the most nebulous and inconclusive definition, namely, that it is literature by women, for women and about women. This is, however, in no way accurate enough to describe the range of texts so far published. It seems that the most exact, albeit still fairly general definition afforded thus far, is one based upon theme and attitude. In this vein Ricarda Schmidt classes *Frauenliteratur* as a form of writing in which "Feministinnen . . . über die Situation der Frau im Patriarchat geschrieben haben."[8]

This statement expresses a distinctly provocative attitude, similar to that mentioned earlier from Renate Möhrmann,[9] and this, it seems, can be taken as the most specific attempt possible to gather the broad spectrum of feminist writing under one group-heading. As a result of this diversity, it is of course possible to subdivide and categorise many more specific perspectives on this situation, beyond the fairly loose description of theme in *Frauenliteratur* as the exposure of women's situation in the patriarchy. Various critics have surveyed the scope of the genre, listing themes and attempting to discover literary or thematic trends.[10] This approach is complicated and usually results in a multitude of subdivisions and subcategories and more often than not these overlap. Sigrid Weigel indicates the complexity of the situation, as far as theme in *Frauenliteratur* is concerned, in the following summary of women's participation in contemporary German literature. She says it "can be described as a rapid development of *women's literature* in the mid-70s and its transition and diffusion into a plethora of very diverse *literatures by women* in the early 80s."[11]

This thematic diversity in the genre seems to suggest that this is not an ideal area upon which to concentrate as part of the debate concerning traits common and peculiar to *Frauenliteratur*. For this reason I feel it necessary to carry out a deeper, structural analysis of the texts

---

[8] Schmidt, p. 3.
[9] See note no.5.
[10] Apart from the essays and books mentioned so far, there are also very general examinations of the genre, such as *Neue Literatur der Frauen: Deutschsprachige Autorinnen der Gegenwart*, ed. Heinz Puknus (München: C.H. Beck, 1980), which considers the writers individually, or Irma Hildebrandt, *Vom Eintritt der Frau in die Literatur: schreibend das Leben bewältigen* (München: Profil-Verlag, 1983), who, after looking at the process of women's entry into the literary sphere, concentrates on the recent developments in the latter section of her book.
[11] Weigel, p. 55.

in order to search for the distinguishing characteristics of women's prose style. It is this kind of technical approach which I will be taking throughout this thesis in an attempt to furnish the discussion of the genre with some tenable observations regarding its peculiar effect.

Before proceeding with this type of analysis, however, it will be of use to examine the emergence of *Frauenliteratur* in a historical sense, taking note of the major developmental stages since the late 1960s, and discussing in brief some of the more predominant trends and thoughts which literary theory and criticism have established thus far.

In turning towards the historical development of *Frauenliteratur*, it is once again valuable to mention the essays by Sigrid Weigel and Renate Möhrmann, both of whom document very well the increase in literary production in the early 1970s, coupled with, and as a result of the rapidly expanding feminist awareness in West Germany.

It is convenient here, for the sake of simplicity and clarity, to use the terminology which is coined by Sigrid Weigel in her analysis of the political and literary developments between the years 1968 and 1975. This period was one of relatively gradual change,[12] with political actions causing a changing awareness, and the latter leading in its turn to increasing literary production. Weigel justifiably reflects these three phases in her terms; "pre-literary phase of the women's movement," "documentation-agitation phase," and "the eventual emergence of *Frauenliteratur*." Between the actions and discussions which were taking place on a political level and the reflection of this initiative in literature, there was a clear delay, and the reasons for this, as well as for the initially cool reception *Frauenliteratur* was given by the women's movement, have been considered by various critics.[13]

It is possible, as Sigrid Weigel and Renate Möhrmann have shown, to define certain important events within each of the three phases outlined above. The first, or pre-literary phase of political development, began in 1968. At this time many young women, disillusioned

---

[12] In comparison to the acceleration of the post 1975 period, but not, of course, with regard to the previous history.

[13] Notably Sigrid Weigel, pp. 54-60, Irma Hildebrandt, pp. 141-7, and also Evelyne Keitel in her essay, "Frauen Texte Theorie: Aspekte eines problematischen Verhältnisses," *Das Argument*, 25 (1983), pp. 830-44.

with the student movement's stance on women's issues, decided to break away from the SDS (*Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*), and formed an independent group in the spring of that year, calling it the "*Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frauen.*" This event, and the period leading up to and including the nationwide protests against the abortion laws in 1971, constituted the origins of what is often called the "*Neue Frauenbewegung.*" As Renate Möhrmann points out, "bei diesem Kampf - kurz Aktion-218 genannt - manifestierte sich zum erstenmal feministisches Bewusstsein."[14]

Once this awareness had been generated and propagated, there came a period of consolidation and documentation, approximately from 1971 to 1975, as people such as Alice Schwarzer and Erika Runge began to record the emancipatory views of women, and managed to publish their collections.[15]

The publication of Karin Struck's *Klassenliebe* in 1973 signalled one of the earliest literary works in Germany, in which certain aspects of the specifically feminist awareness, recently brought about, were expressed. Yet, it was not until the appearance (and almost immediate success) of Verena Stefan's autobiographical work *Häutungen* in 1975 that interest in *Frauenliteratur* 'mushroomed'. The rapid and sustained development on the part of female writers, publishers and literary critics show the effects of Stefan's work to be anything but ephemeral. Indeed, the popularity of this novel has been so great, in spite of varying, and often negative reactions to it, that Elke Frederiksen was not alone in posing the question "warum fühlen sich so viele Leserinnen und Leser durch diesen Text angesprochen, auch wenn sie nicht immer damit übereinstimmen?"[16]

This is a question which will be considered in greater depth at a later stage, but for the moment it is sufficient to recognise the extraordinary impact which this text has had on the

---

[14] Möhrmann, p. 366.
[15] Erika Runge, *Frauen. Versuche zur Emanzipation* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969); *Frauen gegen den Paragraphen 218. 18 Protokolle, aufgezeichnet von Alice Schwarzer* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971); and, Alice Schwarzer, *Der 'kleine Unterschied' und seine grossen Folgen. Frauen über sich. Beginn einer Befreiung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1975).
[16] In her contribution to Heinz Puknus' collection of studies on individual writers, see note no.10, p. 210.

modern German literary sphere. The production and analysis of *Frauenliteratur* has increased in momentum to such an extent, since Stefan's breakthrough, that it is now an established and flourishing literary genre. At this point in time, therefore, it would be difficult to maintain a broad, yet in-depth analysis of the genre without being overwhelmed by the amount of primary and secondary literature available. Ricarda Schmidt thus intimates not only her approach to the problems of an analysis of *Frauenliteratur*, but also that of many other academics, in stating:

> Nicht Vollständigkeit in der Erfassung des Materials, sondern die Herausarbeitung von Entwicklungsphasen und von divergierenden oder kontroversen Konzeptionen der westdeutschen Frauenliteratur ist hierbei das Ziel meiner Arbeit.[17]

The usual approach to the large amount of material published since Verena Stefan's *Häutungen* is, therefore, to search for thematic or conceptual tendancies,[18] and then establish trends based on these observations.

Sigrid Weigel divides the spectrum of texts into many very specific groups, based on such limited themes as "The Story of the Little Girl," "Women's History," "Writing about the Absent Father," "Couples-Separations," and "Chronicles of Illness."[19] Although interesting and useful as a survey of the topics chosen thus far by women writers, this procedure does not advance the problematic question as to why *Frauenliteratur* has such a distinctive effect.

In another attempt to describe this field, Ricarda Schmidt divides feminist prose into three seemingly arbitrary categories, but once again they are thematically-based divisions. She describes them as follows:

> a) Literatur, die auf egalitären, sozialistischen Emanzipationskonzepten basiert und die von Linken propagierten Formen Dokumentation und Neo-Realismus benutzt. b) Literatur, die Körpererfahrung zum Ausgangspunkt nimmt und die Differenz der Geschlechter betont, einen Emanzipationsbegriff ausserhalb der traditionellen politischen Kategorien entwirft und dafür neue Ausdrucksweisen durch Arbeit an der Sprache sucht. c) Selbsterfahrungstexte, die durch das Mitteilen authentischer weiblicher Alltagserfahrungen eine solidarische Diskussion unter Frauen in Gang setzen wollen.[20]

---

[17] Schmidt, p. 5.
[18] As I have already mentioned, see note no.10.
[19] See note no.3.
[20] Schmidt, abstract.

In my opinion, however, it is Renate Möhrmann, whose essay is, indeed, entitled "Feministische Trends in der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur," who sums up the thematic trends in *Frauenliteratur* most precisely when she says:

> Das Infragestellen der oktroyierten Rollenbilder, die Entwicklung eines weiblichen Selbstwertgefühls und die Identitätsbestimmung der Frau mittels ihrer eigenen Erfahrungen waren die Leitthemen der neuen Frauenbewegung, das Bekenntnis zum weiblichen Ich ihr vordringlichstes Postulat. All das hat seinen Niederschlag in der feministischen Literatur gefunden.[21]

Yet some critics, such as Ursula Krechel, Evelyne Keitel and Brigitte Wartmann, select one particular tendency and analyse the scope of *Frauenliteratur* on the basis of that, suggesting a new perspective, from which it would be possible to analyse the texts, or even, a direction which the texts themselves might take in order to have a greater effect.

Ursula Krechel often refers specifically to *Frauenliteratur* in her detailed account of the question of authenticity in literature,[22] and Evelyne Keitel follows this problem up from a slightly different angle, since she suggests looking at the "*Form*," in order to explain the sense of authenticity created, rather than at the content in order to verify it, feeling this to be a very much neglected approach:

> Die Strukturen all dieser Diskussionen bestehen darin, dass nicht über einen *literarischen* Text gesprochen wird, also beispielsweise über ästhetische Darstellungsformen oder über jene emotionalen Prozesse, die während der Romanlektüre ablaufen, sondern Literatur diskutiert wird, als würde es sich um eine nicht-literarische Textform handeln: Ausschliesslich der Inhalt bietet Diskussionsstoff, nicht aber die Form.[23]

Brigitte Wartmann, on the other hand, chooses to discuss *Frauenliteratur* as a means of attacking the patriarchal system, and she considers writing, and more specifically language itself, in the light of its potential for changing traditional thought patterns, stating ultimately:

> Darin [a change in what she calls "der Gebrauch der Sprache"] liegt die Chance einer bewusstseinsverändernden Praxis: die unbewussten und nicht ausgeschöpften Offenheiten, die sich in der symbolischen Ordnung, in der Sprache verbergen, durch einen veränderten Gebrauch hervortreten zu lassen. Dies ist der Kampf mit der Form der Benutzung des gewohnten Bedeutungssystems, der für Frauen, die ihre

---

[21] Möhrmann, p. 341.
[22] Ursula Krechel, "Leben in Anführungszeichen. Das Authentische in der gegenwärtigen Literatur," in *Literaturmagazin 11. Schreiben oder Literatur*, ed. Jürgen Manthey (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979), pp. 80-107.
[23] Evelyne Keitel, p. 832.

schriftstellerische Arbeit als Angriff auf die verfestigten patriarchalen Bewusstseinsformen verstehen, bestimmend ist.[24]

Unfortunately, however, neither Evelyne Keitel nor Brigitte Wartmann actually go on to develop these initial ideas into sustainable facts regarding the uses of particular linguistic structures, and/or narrative techniques, peculiar to the genre *Frauenliteratur*. For this reason it seems necessary to accept this challenge, and, in so doing, I will attempt to demonstrate that such an approach can come closer to elucidating the differences between traditional styles and recent female writing, differences only alluded to so far by thematic categorisation.

For the above-mentioned purpose, it seems that the use and development of language is an ideal point of reference, since most feminist writers, theoreticians and critics appear to agree on two major conceptions; firstly, that there is a need (if feminine awareness is to be adequately expressed) to reject established patriarchal structures and develop a new system, and secondly, that language is the place to begin this process.

Before turning towards the views and statements of individuals on this matter, it will be of some value at this stage to mention that this impulse is also reflected in modern linguistics. Various feminists have begun to examine the existing patriarchal language structures, and as Jeanette Clausen puts it, they "have already done much to sensitize us to certain aspects of linguistic sexism."[25] In her essay, Clausen gives some useful references regarding American publications on sexism in language,[26] but such studies are not confined to America, for the German language is also being carefully scrutinised by linguists such as Senta Trömel-Plötz and Luise Pusch.[27]

---

[24] Brigitte Wartmann, "Schreiben als Angriff auf das Patriarchat," in *Literaturmagazin 11. Schreiben oder Literatur,* ed. Jürgen Manthey (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag,1979), p. 120.

[25] Jeanette Clausen, "Our Language, Our Selves: Verena Stefan's Critique of Patriarchal Language," in *Beyond the Eternal Feminine: Critical Essays on Women and German Literature*, eds. Susan L. Cocalis and Kay Goodman (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1982), p. 382.

[26] Notably, Casey Miller and Kate Swift, *Words and Women* (Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1977); and *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*, eds. Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1975).

[27] Senta Trömel-Plötz, *Frauensprache - Sprache der Veränderung* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, 1982); *Gewalt durch Sprache. Die Vergewaltigung von Frauen in Gesprächen*, ed. Senta Trömel-Plötz (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer

Having briefly mentioned the specifically feminist approaches to linguistics, I would now like to take up the two points raised above, concerning the turn away from patriarchal structures, and the choice of language as a starting point in the struggle to develop new structures.

The origins of these two concepts, as Ingrid Cella indicates,[28] seem to come from the external influences exerted on the German women's movement in the mid-1970s. Ingrid Cella rightly points out that the recognition of the ubiquitous nature of patriarchal structures was derived from the work of Anglo-American feminists, such as Kate Millett, Germaine Greer and Juliet Mitchell, and goes on to mention the importance of the French influence, notably from Simone de Beauvoir and the feminists of the 1970s and 80s such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, concerning theoretical approaches to art and culture.[29]

These developments are vaguely paralleled in the early years of *Frauenliteratur*, since, as Evelyn Torton Beck and Biddy Martin observe, there are three distinct stages in its evolution:

> Es gibt Texte, die sich ausschliesslich mit der Unterdrückung der Frau und ihren Folgen beschäftigen, ohne jedoch auf einen Ausweg zu weisen, der über das individuelle Verlassen einer repressiven Situation hinausgeht . . . Dann gibt es andere Texte, die beschreiben, wie Frauen sich in einer Weise auf ihre Autonomie und Selbst-Verwirklichung hin entwickeln können, die allgemeinere Bedeutung hat. . . . Die radikalsten Texte sind vielleicht jene, welche die Unterdrückung darstellen und gleichzeitig neue Möglichkeiten der Selbst-Bestimmung und neue Chancen aufzeigen, nicht für einzelne Frauen in der Isolation, sondern im Rahmen kollektiven Handelns und eines sich im fortdauernden Kampf ändernden kollektiven Bewusstseins.[30]

There is, therefore, a noticeable progression in *Frauenliteratur* from exposure of the situation - via individual solutions - on to the more radical portrayal of collective feminist action. In connection with the more radical texts, Beck and Martin cite the works of Margot

---

[27](cont'd) Taschenbuchverlag, 1984); and, Luise F. Pusch, *Das Deutsche als Männersprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984).

[28] Ingrid Cella, "Das 'Rätsel Weib' und die Literatur. Feminismus, feministische Asthetik und die neue Frauenliteratur in Österreich," in *Studien zur österreichischen Erzählliteratur der Gegenwart. Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*, Band 14, ed. Herbert Zeman (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982), pp. 194f.

[29] For a detailed discussion of the French structuralist approaches, see Ricarda Schmidt, pp. 200-21.

[30] Beck/Martin, p. 142.

Schroeder, with the qualification that "selbst ihr der Durchbruch zu einer neuen Sprache und Form noch nicht gelungen [ist]."[31] Yet, be that as it may, there is little doubt that one statement in *Der Schlachter empfiehlt noch immer Herz*[32] has become programmatic within the context of women's literary production, namely, when Ola says to Maria, "eine Revolution fängt bei der Sprache an."[33]

Many people have since confirmed and supported the above declaration. Adrienne Rich, for example, notes that "truly to liberate women . . . means to change thinking itself,"[34] a notion which is expanded by Brigitte Wartmann, who observes, "Die schreibenden Frauen machen immer wieder deutlich, dass der Kampf gegen die patriarchalische Kultur anfangen muss beim Widerstand gegen das Instrumentarium des Bewusstseins selbst, der Sprache."[35]

Not only the sexism inherent in the current set of linguistic structures and symbols provoked this concentration on language as a focal point for the furthering of the feminist cause, it was also the inadequacy of the existing forms which was noticed by women when attempting to express their emotions and experiences, a problem commented upon by Verena Stefan, "beim schreiben dieses buches . . . bin ich wort um wort und begriff um begriff an der vorhandenen sprache angeeckt."[36]

Various critics, theoreticians and novelists have discussed this problem,[37] their comments ranging from a general discomfort with language, to fundamental dissatisfaction with an implicit sense of frustration. The latter is exemplified by the following quotation from Luce Irigaray:

---

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] Margot Schroeder, *Der Schlachter empfiehlt noch immer Herz* (München: Frauenbuchverlag, 1976).

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 44-5.

[34] Adrienne Cecile Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), p. 81.

[35] Wartmann, p. 118.

[36] Verena Stefan, *Häutungen. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen, Gedichte, Träume, Analysen*, 20th ed. (München: Verlag Frauenoffensive, 1984), p. 3.

[37] See especially Gabriele Dietze, in the introduction to her collection of theoretical essays, *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit: Texte aus der neuen Frauenbewegung*, ed. Gabriele Dietze (Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1979), pp. 7-21.

> Die gesellschaftliche Unterlegenheit der Frau verstärkt und kompliziert sich aufgrund der Tatsache, dass die Frau keinen Zugang zur Sprache hat, ausser durch Rekurs auf 'männliche' Repräsentationssysteme, die sie ihrer Beziehung zu sich selbst und zu anderen Frauen enteignen.[38]

As a result of both the inadequacy of language and its patriarchal basis, Silvia Bovenschen, one of the leading feminist theoreticians in Germany, indicated the challenge facing creative women in the late 1970s and also the infancy of the struggle at that stage, in stating:

> Der Kampf findet tatsächlich an allen Fronten statt: die Auseinandersetzung mit den Sprachformen, den Zeichensystemen und den Bildwelten, den Symbolen und den Formen des Verhaltens und der Kommunikation ist ein zähes Stück Arbeit, die kaum erst begonnen hat.[39]

Despite the insightful directiveness of this statement, its abstract nature is clear. At this point, therefore, it seems appropriate to go on to consider what feminist writers have achieved in concrete terms with regard to challenging traditional modes of discourse and developing new forms of expression. In the course of the following analysis, I hope to provide conclusive evidence supporting the fact that important changes have been made, and to show that, far from being detrimental to the established forms of literature, these developments have, in fact, provided additional dimensions.

In the literary criticism of recent years there have been various attempts to qualify these new 'dimensions', but most have remained vague observations, relying purely on the general character of texts, rather than designating any specific grammatical or narrative techniques, used by writers in order to create certain effects.[40] It is nevertheless important, within the context of this particular study, to consider briefly the terms which have so far been attributed to the female mode of discourse, and in so doing form a representative notion of the common viewpoint on feminine literary style.

---

[38] Luce Irigaray, *Waren, Körper, Sprache. Der ver-rückte Diskurs der Frauen*, trans. Eva Meyer and Heidi Paris (Berlin: Merve-Verlag, 1976), p. 40.
[39] Bovenschen, see note no.2, p. 96.
[40] With the exception of certain studies on Verena Stefan's use of language in *Häutungen*, notably Jeanette Clausen's essay, see note no.25.

Many opinions with regard to the female style of writing seem to have been influenced (be it directly or indirectly) by the ideas of Luce Irigaray[41] and Hélène Cixous[42] , both of whom rejected the ascendancy given, in traditional rhetoric, to the *logos* over the less restrictive influence of the senses.[43] Basically, this was tantamount to a rejection of the logical and more rigidly structured progression often found in the male mode of rhetoric.

An article by Thomas J. Farrell supports this view, since he perceives the essential difference between the male and female modes of rhetoric as follows:

> Deductive and inductive organization denote arrangements of discourse that appear to be planned in advance, whereas the "indirection" of the female mode seems to proceed without a readily recognizable plan. The thinking represented in the female mode seems eidetic, methectic, open-ended, and generative, whereas the thinking in the male mode appears framed, contained, more preselected and packaged. The ideas seem less processed and controlled in the female mode than in the male mode and hence come closer to recreating the process of thinking as it normally occurs in real life, where thinking is as much a matter of unconscious as of conscious processes and certainly does not move in formal logical structures. . . .[44]

Indeed, this turn away from male logic and linear presentation, in favour of an unrestricted and continuous form of expression, is one of the three distinctions most frequently cited by critics, when making a comparison of this nature. The following quotations from Susan J. Wolfe (Robbins) and Myra Love illustrate this tendency well:

> Male expressive modes reflect linear, cause-and-effect, hierarchical thinking, an epistemology that perceives the world in terms of categories, dichotomies, stasis, and causation. Female expressive modes, if they are to reflect women's epistemology, must embrace ambiguities, pluralities, process, cycles and continuities.[45]

And further, Myra Love's comment in this respect, on the prose style of Christa Wolf:

> In both *The Quest for Christa T.* and the story "Unter den Linden," Wolf makes use

---

[41] Especially those expressed in her study on femininity entitled *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985). Originally published in French under the title, *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Editions de-Minuit, 1977).

[42] For example, in, "Schreiben, Femininität, Veränderung," trans. Monika Bellan *alternative*, 108/109 (June/August 1976), pp. 134-47.

[43] See also Ricarda Schmidt, pp. 214f., for a more detailed explanation of the opinions of Irigaray and Cixous on female writing.

[44] Thomas J. Farrell, "The Female and Male Modes of Rhetoric," *College English*, 40, No.8 (April 1979), p. 910.

[45] Susan J. Wolfe (Robbins), "Stylistic Experimentation in Millett, Johnston, and Wittig," presented at the Modern Language Association, New York City, Dec. 27-30, 1978, p. 1.

> of the self-interrupting and *non-linear* methods of communication which characterize conversation. [my emphasis][46]

The second important difference indicated concerns the quality of "openness," which is so often ascribed to women's rhetoric in general, and *Frauenliteratur* in particular. Evelyne Keitel even goes so far as to say, "das hervorstechendste Merkmal der neuen Frauenbewegung ist . . . ihre kreative *Offenheit*." [my emphasis][47] A plausible definition of this admittedly vague concept is provided by Thomas Farrell, who states, "the emphasis on explicitness . . . in the male mode seems to support a need for closure, whereas the 'indirection' and implicitness in the female mode seem to offer an openness. . . ."[48]

This point can, of course, be associated with the rejection of "closed" male logic, as Brigitte Wartmann demonstrates here:

> Die Reflexion auf das verdrängte Weibliche, das nicht in einem geschlossenen, rationalen Diskurs aufgeht, sondern die 'archaischeren' Ebenen des Bewusstseins *mit* erfasst, lässt mittels einer unabgeschlossenen Textproduktion verschiedene Gebrauchsformen zu. Wie in einem Spiel werden damit offene Interpretationsweisen initiiert, die sich von dem Zwang nach 'logischer' Eindeutigkeit der Sprache lösen. Solche Texte können damit eine der dualen Logik gehorchende Kommunikation irritieren und *produzieren selbst* einen Raum mehrfach zentrierte Bedeutungen, die auf einen veränderten Sinn der Interpretation des Realen verweisen können, ohne selbst den Inhalt der Interpretation festzulegen.[49]

The third major aspect of female prose, apparent in the comments of many critics who have broached this issue,[50] is the attempt being made to break down various existing kinds of barriers. The forms which these 'barriers' usually take will become clear in considering the following selection of references to this trend. It is a point most frequently mentioned in connection with the much-discussed question of authenticity,[51] since, as Evelyne Keitel points out, the main function of this style is to reduce the aesthetic distance, which assures that liter-

---

[46] Myra Love, "Christa Wolf and Feminism: Breaking the Patriarchal Connection," *New German Critique*, 16 (Winter 1979), p. 33. See also Brigitte Wartmann, p. 122.
[47] Keitel, p. 833.
[48] Farrell, p. 910.
[49] Wartmann, p. 123.
[50] Including, for example, the essays of Susan J. Wolfe (Robbins), Evelyne Keitel, Thomas J. Farrell, Evelyn Torton Beck and Biddy Martin, Brigitte Wartmann and Ingrid Cella.
[51] See note no.22.

ature is perceived and read as literature, and not as some other form of text.[52]

This point is clarified somewhat by Evelyn Torton Beck and Biddy Martin's observation that Margot Schroeder's use of language "die Schranken zwischen sich und den anderen, zwischen Erzählerin und Erzähltem, zwischen Text und Leser überwindet."[53] And it is emphasised by Thomas Farrell's statement that "the female mode seems at times to obfuscate the boundary between the self of the author and the subject of the discourse, as well as between the self and the audience, whereas the male mode tends to accentuate such boundaries."[54]

It would seem, therefore, that many feminist texts are aiming to break down the strict dividing lines in literature, which traditionally create a certain distance between the author, the reader and the text itself. The existing separation is also seen as patriarchal by Myra Love. She says, with regard to modernist and realist writing, "both share an essentially patriarchal quality of authorship as authority. This patriarchal quality manifests itself in the separation of the narrator from the narration."[55]

Throughout this analysis I will often refer directly to the three above-mentioned characteristics, for there is, it seems, some accuracy in the consensus of opinion which is neatly encapsulated here by Ingrid Cella, "weibliche Texte zeigen eine 'Kunst der Entgrenzung'. Das Offene, Unabgeschlossene, Strömende, Verschwenderische, Verausgabende sind wichtige Chatakteristika."[56] Yet, thus far, these observations must be considered speculative and inconclusive, since they have neither been proven nor examined in any detail.

It is, therefore, my intention to analyse certain techniques used by women writers, which cause, or at least contribute to some of the effects outlined above. For the purposes of this treatise I have selected two aspects of stylistic development, which appear to indicate a departure from tradition; namely, a) the anomalous use of tense in *Frauenliteratur*, with particular reference to the present tense, and b) the presentation of consciousness peculiar to

---

[52] Keitel, see especially p. 831.
[53] Beck/Martin, p. 144.
[54] Farrell, p. 910.
[55] Love, p. 44.
[56] Cella, p. 203.

this genre.

The more general areas of tense and consciousness have only been referred to indirectly by some critics in connection with individual examples of feminist prose-writing,[57] but have not been considered within the broader context of *Frauenliteratur* as a whole.

The phenomena which will be considered forthwith are common to many works of this category, yet, in order to provide a variety of examples and simultaneously maintain a certain depth in the analysis, it has been necessary to limit this discussion to a representative selection, consisting of four texts:

1. Verena Stefan, *Häutungen. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen, Gedichte, Träume, Analysen* (München: Verlag Frauenoffensive, 1975).

2. Ingeborg Drewitz, *Das Hochhaus* (Stuttgart: Verlag Werner Gebühr, 1975).

3. Brigitte Schwaiger, *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* (Wien: Paul Zsolnay Verlag Gesellschaft, 1977).

4. Eva Zeller, *Die Hauptfrau* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1977).

I have chosen two examples (nos.1 and 3) from what could be called the mainstream of *Frauenliteratur*, taking into account the amount of copies of each printed so far, and the frequency with which they are cited in modern criticism; as well as two less well-known novels (nos.2 and 4) of nevertheless important writers in the feminist movement. The works are all from the early stages of the genre, and comprise two written in the first person (although

---

[57] See, for instance, Jeanette Clausen's essay on Verena Stefan's use of language, especially p. 398, where she notes that points such as these are "worthy of being examined in more detail."

Verena Stefan's work does switch to third-person narration near the end), and two third-person narratives.

Since Verena Stefan tackled the problem of linguistic structures so directly and in such a provocative manner, there have been various critiques examining her work in this light,[11] but the other authors all seem to have been neglected in this respect. I will thus be restricted in many cases, by the originality of the problem and the largely inappropriate secondary literature, to a detailed analysis of the texts themselves.

---

[11] Notably those of Jeanette Clausen and Ricarda Schmidt.

2. Traditional Tense Use

> A cursory glance at the *tenses* used in modern novels, particularly those that employ the stream-of-consciousness techniques, will reveal an almost bewildering variety of situations in which they are used and to which the logic of grammar is inadequate to provide a clue; they presuppose in fact a highly sophisticated reader capable of remarkable imaginative gymnastics. [my italics][59]

Before contemplating the first aspect of literary technique peculiar to *Frauenliteratur*, i.e., the unconventional use of tense, it will be necessary to review the major linguistic and literary analyses of recent years concerning this matter, in order to explicate a clear notion of traditional tense use, and establish the reasons for this and its effects. As outlined earlier, this discussion will focus on the literary effects of certain stylistic and contextual elements of works within this genre, yet a preliminary look at the attempts of certain linguists to call fixed tense schemes into question will nevertheless prove useful, in providing a point of reference for the following analysis.

2.1 The Linguistic Approach to Tense

Perhaps the best-known and boldest linguistic investigation of tense so far was that of Benjamin Lee Whorf. In the 1930s he believed, and attempted to prove, with a degree of success, that the structure of the language one habitually uses influences one's understanding of the environment. This assumption was based on Whorf's belief that all higher levels of thought are dependent on language, and if it was to be conclusively proven, then he needed to demonstrate that people with different linguistic backgrounds do indeed develop different perspectives on reality. His main linguistic research was carried out as part of a contrastive study of English and the language of the Hopi Indians of Arizona, and his work, although it has since been disputed and criticised,[60] concentrating as it did on the structural differences of these languages, did appear to demonstrate a distinct relativity of language.[61] He showed that even

---

[59] Roy Pascal, "Tense and Novel," *The Modern Language Review*, 57 (1962), p. 11.

[60] Notably by Helmut Gipper, in his book *Gibt es ein sprachliches Relativitätsprinzip? Untersuchungen zur Sapir-Whorf-Hypothese* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1972).

[61] See foreword by Stuart Chase, in *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, ed. John B. Carroll, 1st paperback edition

though the gulf can be quite wide when attempting to translate an idea or concept from one European language to another, this gap becomes even wider when considering language structures which are not derived from Indo-European.

The use of tense was an area in which Whorf found interesting support for his theory, for it appeared to be the case that Hopi Indians did not use the same concept of time - past, present and future - as we do. He claimed that Hopi verbs have "three assertions; reportive, expective and nomic,"[62] which, although they correspond to our tenses, do not refer to time or duration, but rather distinguish three different kinds of information. "Assertion, in other words, is a classification that refers a statement to one of three distinct realms of validity."[63] Whorf therefore deduced that the Hopi "Weltanschauung" must differ from that of a European, since the view of time so fundamental to us was non-existent in Hopi language, and hence in their conception of the world.

In spite of the criticism of Helmut Gipper with regard to Whorf's work, where he says, for example:

> Zwar führt seine [Whorf's] Interpretation des sprachlichen Befundes zu dem Ergebnis, dass von Tempora bzw. *tenses* im Sinne der englischen Grammatik keine Rede sein kann; dennoch sind bestimmte Verbformen eindeutig temporal zu deuten.[64]

- it is possible to agree, at least to a certain extent, with the Whorfian hypothesis, that the structure of a person's language is a factor in the way he/she understands reality. As Harald Weinrich stresses in his comments on this concept,[65] Whorf seems to illustrate his point best when applying his observations to a brief comparison of the two cultures.[66] In so doing, Whorf remarks upon Western civilisation's obsession with time, stating that its precise measurement is fundamental to our society, and surmises that this is a consequence of our language patterns.

---

[61](cont'd) (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1964), pp. v-x.
[62] In an essay entitled "Some Verbal Categories of Hopi," *Language*, 14 (1938), pp. 275-86, rpt. in *Language, Thought and Reality*, see previous note, pp. 112-24.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[64] Gipper, p. 224.
[65] Harald Weinrich, *Tempus. Besprochene und erzählte Welt*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1971), pp. 304-5.
[66] See especially the essay, "The Relation of Thought and Behaviour to Language," (1939) in *Language Thought and Reality*, pp. 134-59.

Hopi Indian language and culture, on the other hand, are much less preoccupied with temporal precision, and there is hence a noticeably more relaxed attitude to the speed and passage of time among the people.

In connection with *Frauenliteratur*, it is possible to see in the principle of linguistic relativity, the origin of the ideas expressed by certain feminist critics and writers, namely, that there is a need for a change in language structures, if reality is to be altered.[67] For the purposes of this discourse and the above ideas, however, the Whorfian hypothesis seems too readily to exclude the possibility of reality influencing language, and can, thus, only be considered a starting point for this type of approach, where, it seems conscious adaptations are being suggested on a linguistic (and literary) level, as a result of an implicit dissatisfaction with reality, in an effort to change thought patterns, and eventually reality. There appears, therefore, to be a possible circular development here, for, if the changes made are successful in bringing about a new reality, then we are once again back to the Whorfian hypothesis.

2.2 The Question of Time and Tense in Literature

Since the literary developments introduced by such important writers such as Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Franz Kafka, especially concerning the presentation of consciousness in fiction, the question of "time" in the modern novel has been widely considered. Sharon Spencer neatly summarises these advances as follows:

> In the first decades of the century, . . . a very great transformation in the orientation of the novel to the concept of time was achieved by the "stream-of-consciousness". . . [This was] reflected in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, in Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, in Virginia Woolf's novels, and in hordes of lesser works that embody "subjective" time schemes: the notion that time is "something having no existence apart from an observer and present only in sense experience."[68]

---

[67] Cf. Margot Schroeder's comment in *Der Schlachter empfiehlt noch immer Herz*: "Eine Revolution fängt bei der Sprache an." See note no.32.

[68] Sharon Spencer, *Space, Time and Structure in the Modern Novel* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. xix; the problem of consciousness presentation in a narrative has been examined fairly recently by Dorrit Cohn, in her authoritative study *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), to which I will be referring extensively at a later stage.

In Germany, the appearance of Käte Hamburger's provocative book, *Die Logik der Dichtung*, in 1957 saw the beginning of some very intense discussion regarding the complex question of tense use in literature.[69] The debate focused on the functions of the two most commonly used tenses in literature, namely, the epic preterite and the present, stressing, for the most part, the atemporality and purely signifying capacity of the preterite - in that it "creates a fiction" or "non-reality,"[70] as well as the unsuitability of the present tense as the instrument of a narrative.

2.2.1 The Epic Preterite

The theory of the atemporality of the epic preterite, e.g. "er ging jetzt . . . ," was originally propounded by Käte Hamburger in a series of articles in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* (1951, 1953, and 1955), and subsequently expanded in *Die Logik der Dichtung*. This idea was supported by two important observations; firstly, Käte Hamburger noted the possibility of combining this tense with deictic adverbs, such as "now," "tomorrow," "yesterday" etc., which normally refer to a present point in time, and secondly, she viewed the fact that a story narrated in the past tense is usually summarised in the present tense as evidence that, especially in the case of a third-person narrative, the epic preterite does not have a temporal function, i.e., it does not necessarily denote past events. Käte Hamburger also emphasised, however, that this does not mean the epic preterite has the function of a present tense in a narrative, but rather that it signifies a transformation into a different kind of reality, a fictitious world with its own peculiar time-scale. On the basis of this argument, she deduced that the historic present is superfluous in literature, since a narrative in the epic preterite has already transposed the reader to a timeless

---

[69] The response generated by this work included numerous books and articles, among the most significant contributions are: Harald Weinrich, *Tempus. Besprochene und erzählte Welt* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1964); Roy Pascal, "Tense and Novel," see note no.59, p. 1-11; and, Frank K. Stanzel, "Episches Praeteritum, erlebte Rede, historisches Praesens," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 33 (1959), pp. 1-12. This response prompted Käte Hamburger to revise the first edition of *Die Logik der Dichtung*.

[70] Pascal, p. 3.

world.

Harald Weinrich corroborates the notion that the epic preterite is a tense used to place the reader and/or action into "eine andere Sphäre . . . mit ihrer eigenen Zeit."[71] In his analysis, he divides the tense scheme, as the title implies, into two "worlds," narrated and spoken. In order to demonstrate that the preterite is a tense belonging to the "*erzählte Welt*," he uses the example of a fairy-tale. The beginning, "Es *war* einmal . . . ," and the subsequent narration in the epic preterite are seen as clear examples of the tense signifying here, (and hence in narration in general), a transformation into another sphere. The traditional formulae used to end such a tale always tend to relocate the action in the "*besprochene Welt*" by means of a present tense.

Harald Weinrich's discussion of tense compliments that of Käte Hamburger rather than contradicting it. He too agrees that the narrative is distanced from the actuality of the reader by the epic preterite, but not temporally, since even "Zukunftsromane regelmässig im Präteritum . . . geschrieben [sind]."[72] He also accentuates his location of the present tense in the "*besprochene Welt*" by concurring with Käte Hamburger that it is the usual tense for discussion, and hence the logical choice for a résumé of a book.[73]

A slightly different view is put forward by Roy Pascal, who, in his review of the epic preterite, suggests that the combination of past tense and present reference, e.g. "er wusste nun . . . ," mentioned in *Die Logik der Dichtung*, means that the reader is "slipped into the skin of a character in the story and experiences the situation with him."[74] In his later, unfortunately incomplete study of Kafka's short stories, however, he seems to suggest that the preterite does still represent a 'pastness', in stating:

> the past tense conveys a temporal distance from the events related and hence allows for two time levels. . . . These two levels form a basic dialectic of traditional story-telling, which of course is not affected by the use of the so-called historic present as

---

[71] Weinrich, p. 48.
[72] *Ibid*.
[73] For Weinrich, however, this tense is not, as Hamburger suggests, a "Gegenwartsaussage," it is merely a "gattungs- oder situationsspezifisches Signal dafür, dass es sich um einen besprechenden Text handelt," pp. 43-6.
[74] Pascal, "Tense and Novel," p. 2.

a narrative form, for this is only a disguised preterite.[75]

On the basis of this, it would perhaps be more exact to say that the reader is slipped into the past skin of a character, since he/she is obviously not able to experience the actual situation with the character as a result of the 'temporal distance' which is created by the epic preterite. This difference, although it may well appear negligible and superfluous with regard to the traditional narrative form, where the epic preterite is the only tense used as an instrument for narration, becomes extremely important when one begins to consider the developments noticeable in many works of the genre *Frauenliteratur*, as will be seen later.

Frank K. Stanzel seems, however, to capture the essence of the epic preterite most exactly. He notes that Käte Hamburger's theory, regarding the atemporality of this tense, requires additional qualification, and goes further in demonstrating that this tense has in fact the capability of representing a present, or past time-scale. He differentiates these two possibilities by means of the "*Erzählsituation*." In his words:

> Die Bestimmung der Erzählsituation in einem Roman oder einer Romanpartie ist daher auch geeignet, Aufschluss darüber zu geben, ob der Leser das Erzählte als vergangen oder als gegenwärtig in seine Vorstellung einordnen wird.[76]

He surmises that the possibility of combining deictic adverbs, such as "tomorrow," with an epic preterite, depends upon how far the reader is able to personally obliterate the narrator, (who need not be explicitly mentioned, since the fact that one is reading a novel implies that someone is narrating it), in order to create a temporal "*Nullpunkt*," with the reader on the same level as the figure in the novel, whereby the subjective time expression "tomorrow" is admissible, as the "todays" of both reader and narrator are temporarily identical. Frank Stanzel considers the epic preterite, in spite of its various representative possibilities, a "gattungsmässig gebundenes Element der Erzählung,"[77] whereas the historic present is viewed as a "Stilmittel" on account of its fluctuating favour.

---

[75] Roy Pascal, *Kafka's Narrators: A Study of his Stories and Sketches*, edited after his death by Leonard Forster, M. Swales and A. T. Hatto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 101.

[76] Stanzel, p. 3.

[77] Stanzel, p. 9, cf. the parallel idea expressed by Harald Weinrich concerning the present tense, note no.73.

The conclusions which may be drawn from the preceding arguments regarding tense use in literature remain fairly simple and general; firstly, the epic preterite - or, narrative past as it is also sometimes called - is widely considered to be the only appropriate medium for narration. This is a point emphasised by Harald Weinrich in reference to the views of Thomas Mann, "Thomas Mann hat mehrfach seine Überzeugung ausgedrückt, dass die Tempus-Form Imperfekt die für eine Erzählung richtige Tempus-Form ist."[78] And secondly, as a tense used for this purpose, the epic preterite has the effect of distancing the narrated action from the reader's present situation, be it atemporally, purely by placing the reader in a fictitious world, or, via its temporal function, taking him/her back in time, by referring to past events.

As Margot E. Zutshi has pointed out, however, the situation has changed quite dramatically since Käte Hamburger's book. She remarks that "since the first publication of Hamburger's *Die Logik der Dichtung* in 1957, developments have increasingly been moving away from her ideas on the novel."[79] In explaining the above statement further, Margot Zutshi goes on to cite the well-known phrase coined by Alain Robbe-Grillet - "Raconter est devenu proprement impossible."[80] - yet she does not describe these "developments" in any detail.[81] It is interesting to note, however, in connection with the following analysis of *Frauenliteratur*, that one of the major innovations, introduced by writers such as Alain Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute, was, in fact, the technique of, what Dorrit Cohn calls "adher[ing] to the present as a narrative tense."[82]

2.2.2 Present-tense Narration

Present-tense narration is a variation treated only in passing by Käte Hamburger. Rather than devoting an entire chapter to discuss this question, she includes it in her section

---

[78] Weinrich, p. 24.
[79] Margot E. Zutshi, *Literary Theory in Germany: A Study of Genre and Evaluation Theories 1945-1965* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981), p. 83.
[80] Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Sur quelques notions périmées," in *Pour un nouveau roman* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1963), p. 31.
[81] Since, as the title of her study suggests, this was not actually her aim.
[82] Cohn, p. 137.

entitled "Das historische Präsens." Here, in connection with a reference to Gerhart Hauptmann's *Griechischer Frühling* (1907), she notes an occurrence of present-tense narration:

> Diese [Reiseschilderung] ist ganz und gar im Präsens erzählt, derart, dass nicht nur Zustandsschilderungen, sondern auch jeder Schritt und Tritt des Reisevollzugs selbst gleichsam auf den Augenblick des Sichvollziehens zurückgeführt, gewissermassen filmisch reproduziert wird.[13]

Käte Hamburger means therefore that the reader actually experiences every aspect of the narrator's journey as though taking part in person. Yet the effect of this phenomenon is rather cursorily dismissed as being akin to an extended use of the historic present, on the basis of the text's autobiographical, and hence implicitly retrospective nature:

> Doch wird, was das Vergangenheitsbewusstsein einer autobiographischen Schilderung betrifft, dennoch durch das allein herrschende Präsens keine andere Wirkung erzeugt als in Fällen, wo es mit dem Präteritum wechselt.[14]

At a later stage, however, Käte Hamburger begins to concede that new tense phenomena are starting to occur, when she recognises the difficulty of applying the same type of reasoning to the works of Alain Robbe-Grillet and other exponents of present-tense narration belonging to the "*nouveau roman*" movement in France. She categorises Robbe-Grillet's present tense as a "Präsens tabulare" due to its highly descriptive and objective quality, but her discussion of this divergence is brief and inconclusive. It is simply attributed to the modern breakdown of traditional forms of first- and third-person narration, and concluded with the general remark, "In diesem Zusammenhang sollte nur darauf aufmerksam gemacht werden, dass, auf Grund dieser neuartigen Erzählstrukturen, präsentisches Erzählen *vorkommen kann*, das nicht historisches Präsens ist." [my emphasis][15]

The contemporary scarcity of such new phenomena is clear here, as a result of the non-committal phrase which I have highlighted, yet a glance at many works written by women in German since the mid-1970s forces a complete re-appraisal of the frequency with which

---

[13] Käte Hamburger, *Die Logik der Dichtung*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1968), p. 85.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

present-tense narration now occurs.

Käte Hamburger is not alone in dismissing present tense narration as a rather obscure and unlikely form, since it is a technique hardly considered at all by Harald Weinrich and Frank Stanzel. Roy Pascal, on the other hand, does attempt to do the phenomenon justice, both in his essay "Tense and Novel" (1962), and much later in his Kafka study (1982). In the earlier treatise he acknowledges the suitability of this time-frame for short tales and anecdotes,[16] and follows this point up in his analysis of Kafka's short stories, but he appears to concur with Käte Hamburger's objection to its use in an extended novel. The reason given by Hamburger for her objection is the undoubted grammatical ambiguity of the present tense, (since it can, of course, designate the present point in time, a general timeless statement, a repeated or habitual action, not to mention past or future events), which, as Roy Pascal suggests, could lead to "confusion being caused"[17] in an extended tale, but not so much in a short story concerning a unique event and with little reflection. Indeed, he goes further, saying that in a novel such as Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* (1951), written entirely in the present tense, "the absence of the power of reflexion leaves us with so kaleidoscopic a succession of incidents that it becomes fatiguing."[18]

The undeniable neglect of the possibility of extended present-tense narration by the various critics cited above, seems to be reflected in the approach of a large contingent of modern male authors to the question of appropriate tense use in prose-writing. This was exemplified in a practical study of tense carried out at the Universität Basel in 1971,[19] where, in order to determine the relation between writers and their language, the co-operation of a number of (male) authors was obtained to discuss the use of the perfect tense as opposed to the epic preterite, and vice-versa, in their respective works.

---

[16] Pascal, "Tense and Novel," p. 9.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Der Schriftsteller und sein Verhältnis zur Sprache, dargestellt am Problem der Tempuswahl*, ed. P. A. Bloch (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1971).

The results of this interesting and direct approach showed quite categorically that the epic preterite was still predominant in the works of the participating authors, such as Günter Grass, Peter Handke, and Max Frisch, to name but a few. The main reasons for this preference were the influence of "*Hochdeutsch*," and the flowing style which the preterite permits, compared to the compound and mainly conversational perfect tense, which can be slightly cumbersome if used too often in prose.

The discussion went further in analysing each author's intentional use of the perfect tense, as a "*Stilmittel*," and his reasons for choosing it. On this point opinions varied greatly. Many authors view the perfect as bringing the action closer to the present, when used in a passage mainly in the preterite, whereas others dispute this, putting the perfect further into the past, as signifying completed actions. The point which I would like to emphasise here, on the basis of this evidence, is that the established narrative tense in the modern German novel is the epic preterite, and occasional uses of the perfect can vary, as explained above, in their significance.

The distancing effect created by the epic preterite, outlined earlier, is often intentionally reduced when authors insert instances of perfect tense. Some writers, however, choose the historic present in order to highlight the immediacy of events occurring in the past which have special significance in the narrative. As Günter Grass explains:

> Sie können in meinen Büchern immer wieder feststellen, dass eine Erzählung im Präteritum anfängt und dann plötzlich ins Präsens umspringt, wodurch - auf kürzere oder längere Strecken - vorübergehend eine Unmittelbarkeit des Erzählens eintritt. Dann sinkt das Erzählte wieder ins Präteritum zurück, um später abermals umzuschlagen. Das Erzählte wird also im eigentlichen Sinne beschworen, wie man es oft im Umgangsdeutsch erlebt, wo Leute, die ein Erlebnis berichten wollen, das sie unmittelbar berührt hat, spontan ins Präsens fallen. - Das Präsens will in diesem Fall Vergangenes präsent machen, während das Präteritum das Erzählte distanziert in seinem Verlauf als Vergangenes fasst.[90]

Günter Grass' use of the present, as a means of both describing and highlighting events from the past, is not peculiar to him, indeed, it is a very common occurrence in narrative prose.

---

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 338-9.

In many of the recent works by women, however, we appear to have a complete reversal of this phenomenon common to the majority of works written by men, i.e., the dominant use of the epic preterite, interspersed by elements written in the historic present. For, in many novels of the genre *Frauenliteratur*, we can see quite clearly that the narrated action takes place in the present tense, and those events or thoughts which are highlighted from the past are set, quite logically, in the perfect or the preterite.[91] This technique is, of course, not entirely new, and Dorrit Cohn has already noted its existence in the work *As I Lay Dying* (1930), by William Faulkner, for she says "it seems as though Faulkner had deliberately reversed the customary tense pattern: the past tense appears at the unforgettable moment in an episode narrated in the present tense throughout."[92] Yet the current widespread use of this style is noteworthy, and such emphasis certainly merits further investigation.

In returning momentarily to the study done at the Universität Basel, however, it becomes apparent that in the history of the novel in Germany there is an extremely static tradition with regard to tense usage, and also, that this rigid pattern extends well into the modern male literary sphere. The fact that such a clearly definable tradition exists, and that, in spite of the "*nouveau roman*" movement in France, no distinct stylistic changes are apparent in modern German prose in this respect, could be considered reasons valid enough for feminist writers to demand a variation, in order to reanimate the existing stasis. Yet, there is more to the above-mentioned reversal in tense usage than simply a desire to break with tradition. In the following chapter, therefore, I intend to take Frank Stanzel's comment[93] a step further, by considering the epic preterite to be a "*Stilmittel*," having prevailed for the duration of the novel as a form thus far, but which, for various reasons, to be examined forthwith, may well be gradually being replaced, as far as many feminist writers are concerned, by the present tense.

---

[91] This latter technique also avoids the problem to which Roy Pascal referred, see note no.88, with regard to the "fatiguing effect of novels written throughout in the present tense."

[92] Cohn, p. 206.

[93] See note no.77.

3. Tense use in "Frauenliteratur"

> Es ist ja selten, dass Vater sich Grossmutters Erzählungen anhört. Sie sind alle verwickelt und verästelt wie das Leben selbst. Kein Anfang und kein Ende. Vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste, immer den Faden verloren. Grossmutter will ja nichts auslassen, was an Wesentlichem dazukommt, und am Schluss sitzt sie und fragt uns, ob wir wissen, was sie erzählen wollte.[94]

As I have already suggested, there appears to be a definite trend evident in a significant proportion of *Frauenliteratur*, with regard to the use of the present tense as the predominant narrative medium, as opposed to the conventional epic preterite. Since feminist writers are in the process of trying to realise what Virginia Woolf called "the development by the average woman of a prose style completely expressive of her mind,"[95] the question arises as to whether this time-frame serves any particular function towards that end, and if so, in what way? In order to consider these points in some depth, I have chosen to divide the analysis into two parts. Firstly, I intend to examine the two first-person texts (Verena Stefan and Brigitte Schwaiger), and subsequently, those written in the third person by Ingeborg Drewitz and Eva Zeller. In so doing, I hope to show that, although the uses and effects of this time-frame do vary slightly with each different type of text, there emerges a distinguishable overall pattern. For this reason the discussion will focus primarily on the temporal infrastructure of the texts as a whole, rather than on specific techniques as used in restricted contexts. It will, nevertheless, be of use at this stage to provide a brief review of the customary terminology used to distinguish the multifarious present-tense meanings in order to afford the discussion a certain nomenclative uniformity.

As was noted earlier, the versatility of the present tense is often almost bewildering. It can be used to describe events which took place in the past, in a very vivid way (evocative or historic present), as well as being able to indicate events which will take place in the future. The situation is no less complex when this tense denotes present time, as it can refer to the

---

[94] Brigitte Schwaiger, *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979), p. 47. All further references to this to this book are found in this edition. Page numbers for direct quotations will be given in parentheses in the text.

[95] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, p. 91.

specific point in time at which an action is being performed (punctual), to an action which is repeated (iterative), or else, to actions and states lasting over a period of time (durative). Finally, there are, of course, timeless statements with a general truth, such as "day follows night," for which the term "gnomic present" is used. As will be seen forthwith, some of these possibilities occur regularly in the course of individual works, often with the intention of effectuating a certain mood or feeling in the reader.

The effects created by the present tense in various styles of writing are as diverse as the possible meanings outlined above, and two additional factors must also be taken into account when considering the effect, or function of this tense; firstly, the fact that tense-effect is a highly subjective and often controversial area, as can be seen in the variety of opinions cited earlier in connection with Käte Hamburger's *Logik der Dichtung*. And secondly, that the effects brought about can, and do fluctuate quite dramatically within one style of writing, and from one to another, i.e., from narration to criticism, or journalism to historical reporting, etc. Roy Pascal touched upon this issue in his essay "Tense and Novel."[96] Here he notes, for example, that the tense used in fiction for synoptic chapter-headings is generally the present, and goes on to explain that:

> The overriding effect of the use of the present tense in these cases is to assert, in an unobtrusive way, the authenticity of the story; for in these headings the events are seen in another perspective, they are resumed by the author as editor (not as story-teller), and so there is a double verification, that of the author as story-teller, and that of the author sitting back and taking stock, contemplating the events which in the novel he narrates.[97]

Whereas in a historical work, he suggests that synopses in the present tense would create a sense of fiction.

In spite of the many nuances apparent in the individual reception of this tense, however, I hope to demonstrate shortly that there is, nonetheless, a widespread unity in the general effect of this tense in *Frauenliteratur*, which may, in a sense, be traced back to Ricarda Schmidt's earlier definition of the genre as "was Feministinnen . . . über die Situation der Frau

---

[96] See note no.59.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

im Patriarchat geschrieben haben."[98] That is to say, there is doubtless a general concern with the current position of women in society among feminist writers,[99] and what better medium to express this very actual dissatisfaction than the present tense?

3.1 First-person texts - Verena Stefan and Brigitte Schwaiger

In connection with the idea of focusing attention on a specific time-period, Irma Hildebrandt specifies an important feature common to these writers, in her comments on their first and most successful works to date. She says that they both appear to be using their writing as a means toward the discovery of their individual (feminine) identity. Verena Stefan is described as "immer auf der angestrengten Suche nach ihrer eigentlichen Identität - wobei ihr Schreiben als hilfreiches Mittel der Selbstfindung erscheint."[100] And she continues in the same vein, introducing Brigitte Schwaiger thus, "Aus ähnlicher Motivation heraus schrieb . . . Brigitte Schwaiger ihr überaus erfolgreiches erstes Buch."[101] The idea that writing is itself part of the on-going process of self-discovery for these (and many other) feminist writers seems to suggest the immediate present to be the appropriate point of temporal reference, and the present tense as the most suitable time-realm in which to depict this continuum. Closer analysis of the texts themselves will, I feel, bear out this hypothesis.

3.1.1 Verena Stefan: Häutungen

Häutungen,[102] which could be considered semi-autobiographical, describes the various stages in the main character, Veruschka's so-called 'shedding' process, as they are experienced by her. The idea of shedding an old skin and growing a new and improved one is metaphorically

---

[98] See note no.8.
[99] Sigrid Weigel states, in this respect, that "German women's literature in the 1970s began by examining the compatibility of women's experience in the *patriarchal present* and thereby focused on promoting solidarity." [my emphasis], p. 74.
[100] Hildebrandt, p. 106.
[101] *Ibid.*
[102] All further references to this book are found in the 1984 edition, published in München by Verlag Frauenoffensive. Page numbers for direct quotations will be given in parentheses in the text.

representative of the narrator/protagonist's search for a new feminine identity. Through the text, we are shown the problems involved in the progression from a rejection of the old male-formed 'skin', symbolised in the break up of a heterosexual relationship, to the eventual development of a purely feminine awareness. During this development the narrator/protagonist describes her relationships with two other women, and expresses the problems and feelings experienced in that period. The work closes on a very unusual and problematic note, for in the fourth and final chapter, "Kürbisfrau," there is a complete change of perspective. The text switches from the first to the third person, and the present tense is given up in favour of the preterite until the final few lines. There is also a change of name, for the protagonist becomes Cloe for the final pages, in what could be considered Verena Stefan's attempt to objectivise and/or take stock of the developments which have so far been taking place.

In the course of this work, the writer employs various clearly visible techniques in overtly attempting to alter the existing language to suit her purposes. She often breaks up compound words into their component parts, for example, "unter leib," (pp. 12, 16) thus forcing a revised approach to their meaning. She spells the pronoun "man" "mann," (p. 12) as well as making use of poems and being very deliberate with regard to the layout of a page, isolating certain lines and even dividing a page into two columns (p. 25). She does not capitalise nouns, and chooses to use clinical vocabulary instead of the "gängigen ausdrücke" (p. 3) for parts of the body and sexual intercourse, most of which are particularly brutal and offensive to women, yet she does stress, both in the foreword and in the text itself, that even this is unsatisfactory, and eventually she would like to see the development of a form of language suitable to women's needs, with specifically female terms for specifically female emotions and experiences. These more apparent linguistic aspects of the text have already been widely discussed.[103]

The question of time and the use of tense have, however, only been noted in passing by certain critics. In spite of this, it becomes clear, in comparing the comments of these critics,

---

[103] See especially Jeanette Clausen's essay, note no.25.

that there is a large discrepancy in many of their views on the temporal structure of this particular text. Sigrid Weigel, for instance, says "the narrative perspective - first person, without authorial distance, in the perfect tense - inspires trust,"[104] whereas Sally Patterson Tubach claims, "In this last chapter the narrator switches from the first to the third person, the tense is changed to the past,"[105] thus implying present tense use throughout the previous chapters, and Ricarda Schmidt appears to take up the central position, in stating:

> Durch das Verweben gegenwärtiger und vergangener Erlebnisse, eingeschobener verallgemeinender Reflexionen über sie, das Unbewusste offenbarender Träume und lyrischer Verdichtungen gelingt es Stefan, unter der verdinglichten Oberfläche die verschüttete Realität der Frau im Patriarchat bewusstzumachen.[106]

This inconsistency is loosely accounted for by Wolfgang Heinz Schober's general remark on the modern novel. He says, with some justification, "Der moderne Roman geht mit den Zeitverhältnissen oft sehr willkürlich um."[107] But I feel that it is explained further by the comments of Susan J. Wolfe (Robbins) on women's style:

> To express a feminist consciousness through women's style, writers replace abstract and general nouns and verbs with concrete, specific ones; *write in the continuous present*; employ run-ons, fragments and other unconventional punctuation to reflect their thought and experiences; wrench words from their patriarchal meanings and uses, or create new words. *The new feminist novel often breaks the boundaries between the world of the art work and reality, between events and the character's and/or author/narrator's perception of them, between past, present, and dream world--fusing all into the unique perspective of an individual woman seeking the meaning of her own existence.* . . . [my emphasis][108]

For one of the main problems in discerning the temporal structure of a work such as this, is precisely the fact that, in the text, there is a fusion of past and present time within the consciousness of the author/narrator. That is to say, both the author/narrator, and hence the reader, find it difficult to separate the past and its significance, from the present, in order to

---

[104] Weigel, p. 62.
[105] Sally Patterson Tubach, "Verena Stefan's *Häutungen*: Homoeroticism and Feminism," *Beyond the Eternal Feminine: Critical Essays on Women and German Literature*, eds. Susan L. Cocalis and Kay Goodman (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1982), p. 373.
[106] Schmidt, p. 118.
[107] Wolfgang Heinz Schober, *Erzähltechniken in Romanen: Eine Untersuchung erzähltechnischer Probleme in zeitgenössischen deutschen Romanen* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1975), p. 28.
[108] Wolfe (Robbins), p. 1.

arrange events neatly and 'logically' into a strictly chronological pattern. The reader therefore experiences the same process as the author/narrator, in that he/she must also attempt to sort the vivid memory flashes from the present situation, and determine the influence of the past upon the present identity of the narrator. As Elke Frederiksen puts it, "Leserinnen und Leser werden in den Gedankengang einbezogen."[109] In this way, it becomes evident that a writer such as Verena Stefan is subtly, but consciously, recreating the procedures of an (essentially female) mind, so as to reduce the distance between author, narrator and reader, by drawing the reader into the thought process.[110]

Despite the complications outlined above, Ricarda Schmidt offers a brief but plausible description of the use of tenses in the first part of this text, when she says:

> Stärker als vorher werden hier konkrete Erfahrungen und spätere Reflexionen verwoben, wie sich an dem Hin- und Herwechseln zwischen Imperfekt und Präsens zeigt. Meistens steht dabei das Spezifische, Vergangene im Imperfekt und die verallgemeinernde Reflexion im Präsens. Manchmal jedoch drückt Stefan durch die Präsensschilderung vergangener Ereignisse aus, wie gegenwärtig diese subjektiv empfunden werden können. Stefan bricht so die lineare Zeitfolge auf und zeigt im Verweben der Zeitebenen die Gegenwart des Vergangenen und die kritische Sicht der Vergangenheit von der Gegenwart her.[111]

In considering the text as a whole, however, two of these points require further qualification. First of all, the adverbs "meistens" and "manchmal" would appear more appropriate if they were exchanged, since it is noticeable as the text progresses that the evocative present is used to a much greater extent than the word "manchmal" implies, as the specifically past events are depicted with an increasing immediacy. Secondly, there are also very many occasions where the narrator/protagonist uses the imperfect tense to express an objective and generalising reflection, such as "ich brauchte ihn, weil ich mich nicht hatte." (p. 26) And "Ich war sexualitätsmüde." (p. 57)

The essential difficulty, therefore, in attempting to solve the complex problem of time in this text, is the fact that there are various temporal levels within the work, which often run

---

[109] Frederiksen, p. 212.
[110] The reduction of this distance was discussed earlier as one of the three major characteristics of a specifically feminine literary style propounded by critics.
[111] Schmidt,, p. 115.

into one another without any customary warnings, such as a clear change of tense. We have, for instance, the actual present - at the narrator's time of writing, for which the punctual present is used, "tagelang gehe ich umher, kann worte nicht finden, aus den vorhandenen worten keine auswahl treffen." (p. 112) And, in order to stress the actuality of this time level, occasionally the future tense, "Morgen früh werde ich an deiner haustür klingeln du wirst den türöffner betätigen ich werde diese seiten in deinen briefkasten werfen. . . ." (p. 118) Within this 'actual present', there are momentary statements explaining a certain past attitude or state of mind (see the above quotations from pp. 26, 57), in the imperfect tense. The past is also divided into two realms; firstly such vivid memories as the rape scene (p. 24), narrated in the evocative, or historic present, and the more distanced past events, which Ricarda Schmidt calls "das Spezifische, Vergangene," in the imperfect tense. In addition to this there is also the problematic final chapter "Kürbisfrau," which is almost all narrated in a very distanced manner, in the third person and mostly the epic preterite.

In order to organise, or at least explain this very complex and often seemingly arbitrary juxtaposition of events and thoughts from different periods, it is necessary, in my opinion, to approach the problem of time in this work in similar fashion to George H. Szanto's analysis of the aspect of time in the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet, many of which are narrated in the present tense. He says:

> The structuring power behind Robbe-Grillet's novels is psychological time. In the sense that events as they occur to the mind of the narrator take place one after the other, the time of the novels is totally chronological.[112]

When this reasoning is applied to *Häutungen*, the situation is clarified somewhat, for, in considering the text as the development of an identity through a re-examination (in the mind) of the past, i.e., what the mind considers to be of significance from the past, and an evaluation of the present situation, the narrative immediately gains a distinct temporal structure. Simplified a little, it seems that, to explain the subsequent narrative, Verena Stefan could well

---

[112] George H. Szanto, *Narrative Consciousness: Structure and Perception in the Fiction of Kafka, Beckett, and Robbe-Grillet* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), p. 151.

have quoted the following introductory statement from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, "I am going to develop in your presence as fully and freely as I can the train of thought which led me to think this."[113] Much of what George Szanto goes on to say regarding Robbe-Grillet's work, is also true of Verena Stefan:

> Since Robbe-Grillet is creating a narrating consciousness, and since that consciousness moves forward chronologically as the book progresses, the thing created cannot be seen simply as a completed piece of work, existing merely in one's hands as one holds the book. Instead, implicated in the actions of the protagonist, the reader moves forward with the narrative through descriptions which are controlled by a constant state of flux; . . . The essential sensation is one of process; the processes of the mind accumulate in an order based only on related association, but they are structured to establish the essence of the mood that dominates the mind of the narrative from beginning to end.[114]

The 'sensation of process' mentioned here, bears great similarity to the effect created by *Häutungen*. The reader experiences the narrator/protagonist's 'shedding process' in a very direct way. This is partly a result of the first-person narration, and also because of the technique employed by the writer in recreating the workings of a mind, by providing the narrative with no temporal structure, in the usual 'logical' sense. In my opinion, however, what gives this process its "beachtenswerte Intensität"[115] is the use made by the writer of the present tense, and the emphasis placed upon the present situation during the course of the 'shedding process'.

Very much like the so-called "New-Novelists" in France, such as Nathalie Sarraute and Alain Robbe-Grillet, who "purposefully exploit the ambiguities of present-tense narration,"[116] Verena Stefan's present tense fulfils at least a dual function. For the most part, it is used to highlight events or thoughts from the past, and can therefore be termed an evocative present. An example of this is the following description of a walk home:

> Auf dem nachhauseweg komme ich an einer kneipe vorbei. an einem tisch unmittelbar

---

[113] Woolf, p. 6.
[114] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-3; compare also the sentence, "ein buch ein prozess ein stück leben, sagte sich Cloe: *veränderbar.*" (*Häutungen*, p. 122).
[115] Zbigniew Swiatlowski, "Frauenliteratur: Entwurf einer neuen Sensibilität," *Text und Kontext*, 10 (1982), p. 110; Ute Tempel also mentions the immediacy of *Häutungen* in "Wie können frauen als menschen schreiben?" *mamas pfirsiche - frauen und literatur*, 4/5 (1977), pp. 31-43.
[116] Cohn, p. 206.

> am gehsteig, sitzen zwei männer und zwei frauen. einer der männer stuzt, wie er mich sieht. er macht zu den andern eine bemerkung; sie drehen sich nach mir um. (p. 7)

On certain occasions the past is indicated by a change of tense, such as the one singled out by Jeanette Clausen[117] in order to show the switches from past to present tense in describing the same event, "die nächte, in denen ich wach liegen blieb, machten mich wachsam. Ich betrachte den menschen neben mir, betrachte mich, betrachte ihn. . . ." (p. 71) Yet this is not always the case, since often episodes are related from beginning to end in this very immediate and vivid way, as the description of a night spent with Samuel (pp. 44-7) clearly demonstrates.

Qualitatively speaking, there is little difference between this tense and that described earlier by Günter Grass (with the possible exception of the fact that here the frame of the text is also set in the present, and not, as with Grass, in the preterite). With regard to its quantitative relationship to the main frame of the text, however, there does appear to be a change in emphasis, for its use here is markedly more frequent and prolonged than is often the case elsewhere. The effect of Verena Stefan's extensive use of this technique is one of high intensity and immediacy, As can be seen in the passage describing the scene at Samuel's before he and Veruschka spend the night together:

> Es ist kein laut zu hören. krater tun sich auf. der fahrstuhl hält mit einem ruck. in der wohnung nimmt Samuel mich bei der hand und sagt, komm, wir trinken noch einen schnaps. argwöhnisch mustern wir uns im neonlicht der küche. (p. 45)

Those events which come vividly to the mind of the narrator/protagonist are bodied forth with the same sense of authenticity in the reader's consciousness, and, as the following references to other works of the genre indicate, this phenomenon is not limited to the work of Verena Stefan. Jutta Kolkenbrock-Netz and Marianne Schuller remark, in connection with Anja Meulenbelt's *Die Scham ist vorbei. Eine persönliche Geschichte* (1978):

> Zwar ist das Bemühen um *Vergegenwärtigung* erkennbar, wenn streckenweise aus der Perspektive der vergangenen Ichs erzählt wird, nicht zufällig wählt daher die Autorin auch fast durchgängig die grammatische Zeitform des *Präsens*, [my emphasis][118]

---

[117] Clausen, p. 398.

[118] Jutta Kolkenbrock-Netz and Marianne Schuller, "Frau im Spiegel. Zum Verhältnis von autobiographischer Schreibweise und feministischer Praxis," *Entwürfe von Frauen in der Literatur des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, ed. Irmela von der Lühe (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1982), p. 162.

And Sigrid Weigel talks of Birgit Pausch's *Die Verweigerungen der Johanna Glauflügel* (1977), thus:

> The story is not told chronologically and has no real ending. Scenes weave in and out of different situations, between past and present, experience and reflection, different realms, oppressive confinement, contradiction and the yearning to be free. The linguistic strength of the story lies in its precise, immediate description.[119]

It is interesting, though hardly surprising, to note that as *Häutungen* progresses there is a growing sense of immediacy. The majority of reflections connected with Veruschka's period of dependence on males are distanced in the preterite, with only particularly significant moments highlighted, such as the various cases of sexual harassment (pp. 7, 37), culminating in the rape scene on page 24. As the memories become more positive in nature, in the second and third chapters, they are narrated in a more direct manner, and the use of the evocative present increases proportionally. The closer the narrator/protagonist's mind gets to the present, the more instances of so-called punctual present one finds, and the more pertinent the text becomes, as illustrated by the following excerpt, in which Veruschka describes the effect of her menstruation:

> Die spuren am tampon bleiben noch einen tag lang hellrot. dann aber werden die krämpfe heftiger, sie gehen strahlenförmig von der gebärmutter aus, ich bekomme durchfall, ich lege mich hin, drehe mich in alle richtungen, keine hilft. die wärme des heizkissens fängt schliesslich an zu wirken, ich trinke heissen tee mit milch. (p. 108)

This gradual turn towards an evaluation of the present situation is thus achieved by means of the second major function performed by the present tense in the text, i.e., the description of events and/or states at a specific point in time (punctual present). The specific point in time here is as close as possibe to "hier und jetzt" (pp. 10, 63), for there must inevitably be some delay between actual and narrated time in a first-person text. Some examples of the punctual present can be found, as mentioned earlier, on page 112, as well as in the passage:

> In den zurückliegenden, verschütteten jahren habe ich gespeichert. jetzt, da ich wacher bin in einem raum mit mehr zeit und mehr kraft, kann ich die bruchstückhaften gedanken aneinander reihen.
> Ich habe meine notizbücher der letzten zehn jahre studiert und beginne, zögernd mein

---

[119] Weigel, p. 67.

> geschichtsfeld durchzuarbeiten. unmerklich hat sich mein dasein auf meine geschichte und auf die frau, die ich jetzt bin, verlagert. (p. 78)

More isolated uses of this present tense, such as can be seen enclosing a vague memory on page 93, "Ich weiss nicht mehr" and page 97, "warum weiss ich nicht," are no less effective in stressing that we have reached the new and current stage in Veruschka's life. The overall effect of uniting experiences from different time levels within this present time is that Verena Stefan's message "schält sich im Bewusstsein der Leser/innen immer deutlicher heraus."[120]

In addition to this, the final few lines of the text, also in the present tense, are very open, leaving the reader to contemplate the further development, as well as the present state of the 'shedding process'. The sentence "Cloe trägt flicken ihrer alten häute an sich herum. sie ist bunt gescheckt und geht kichernd durch die strassen" (p. 124) suggests that the metamorphic development is under way, but by no means complete at this point in time.

The emphasis on the narrator/protagonist's present situation is not limited to the use of a particular time-frame, since it is also explicitly stated, or implied, on various occasions throughout the text, for example:

> nichts macht mir die zeit, die vergangenheit, die ungewisse zukunft, die zischenden jahre schärfer und schmerzlicher gegenwärtig. (p. 6)

> die schrecken der gegenwart sind vertraut, die unbekannte zukunft birgt unberechenbare gefahren. (p. 60)

> Es gibt bruch stücke aus der vergangenen geschichte
> meiner eigenen wie derjenigen aller frauen
> die ich erkennen kann.
> Es gibt eine angedeutete richtung für die zukünftige
> geschichte in der gegenwart
> laufen übereinander gelagerte prozesse ab in
> verschiedenen geschwindigkeiten rhythmen und auf
> verschiedenen ebenen.
> Es ist keine übereinstimmung da. die verschiedenen
> prozesse treffen zu unterschiedlichen
> zeitpunkten mit unterschiedlicher stärke in mir zusammen. . . . (p. 116)

And the sense of transition in this present stage is strengthened by the frequency of phrases such as "ich beginne," (pp. 61, 62, 78, 79, 98) and "mein neues leben" (pp. 73, 76).

---

[120] Schmidt, p. 114.

Finally, the present tense as used in this work, has at least one more function, since it also contributes to the dismantling of a traditional barrier, a point mentioned earlier, in connection with the common traits in female literary style. In her essay, "Verena Stefan's *Häutungen*: Homoeroticism and Feminism," Sally Patterson Tubach says that "the dividing line between fiction and non-fiction (autobiography) is intentionally blurred in this work,"[121] but the only justification which she provides for this observation is the subtitle given to *Häutungen* by the writer, i.e., *Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen, Gedichte, Träume, Analysen*. In agreeing with this statement, I would also suggest that this effect is partially brought about by the predominant use of the present tense, because, as Käte Hamburger pointed out, it is often the literary use of the epic preterite which transports the reader into the fictitious world, whereas here, as a result of the two forms of the present tense, we are drawn into a continuing process of self-discovery, both on the part of Veruschka/Verena Stefan and ourselves. This last aspect could well be considered one of the reasons for the book's overwhelming popularity, and the fact that "[sich] so viele Leserinnen und Leser durch diesen Text angesprochen [fühlen]."[122]

3.1.2 Brigitte Schwaiger: Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer

The sense of authenticity achieved by "blurring the dividing line between fiction and non-fiction," mentioned here with regard to *Häutungen*, is also apparent in Brigitte Schwaiger's first novel *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*, and the intensification of this authentic feel, by a significant use of the present tense, is even more in evidence in this novel. Heinz Puknus, for example, describes the fundamental issue here as "'Authentizität' persönlichen Erlebens und Erleidens."[123] There is little doubt that this 'Authentizität' is also accentuated by the clear similarity between the lives of the "Ich-Erzählerin" and Brigitte Schwaiger herself. The content of the text is highly, but not totally autobiographical, for it documents the state of mind of a young woman from a small Austrian town throughout her very unsuccessful

---

[121] Patterson Tubach, p. 355.
[122] See note no.16.
[123] Puknus, p. 231.

marriage, leading the reader from the wedding-day festivities, via the disillusionment and depressing monotony of housewife existence, on to the eventual divorce, and the sad realisation that the earlier promise was "alles Trick." (p. 121) The failure of a relationship and the autobiographical nature of this novel are two of the more obvious similarities between it and *Häutungen*, which no doubt prompted Sigrid Weigel to regard *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* "as a later variant of *Shedding* [*Häutungen*] for a bourgeois public."[124]

As is the case with many feminist novels, the action is narrated entirely from the perspective of the "Ich-Erzählerin," who, incidentally, remains unnamed throughout this text. We have, therefore, a kind of protracted interior-monologue technique, and, with the exception of isolated distanced reflections, almost continual present-tense narration. As a result of this style, the reader relives much of the unhappy marriage along with the protagonist. The stream-of-consciousness thus created also permits a very flowing mode of expression, and gives the writer the opportunity to concentrate more closely on the workings of the mind, without being distracted or distanced from it by the narrative past, or the third person.

The choice of semi-autobiographical story, "Ich-Erzählerin" and interior monologue in order to consider "[die] verschütteten Jahre" (*Häutungen*, p. 78), was a very common combination in the early years of *Frauenliteratur*, as more and more attempts were made by writers to develop and refine what Renate Möhrmann calls "[ein] weiblich[es] Ich,"[125] something which, in this respect, was virtually non-existent in literature until that time, and which was, of course, vital to any further literary development.

In considering the "verschütteten Jahre" of the protagonist's married life and childhood, the stress in *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* appears, superficially, to fall much more on the past and its problems than was perhaps the case in *Häutungen*. Hans Wolfschütz certainly seems to support this view when he says, "immer wieder wird die Gegenwartshandlung überblendet durch Erinnerungen der Erzählerin an ihre Kindheit und Jugend."[126] On closer

---

[124] Weigel, p. 77.
[125] Möhrmann, p. 340.
[126] Hans Wolfschütz, "Brigitte Schwaiger," *Kritisches Lexikon der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*, Band 4, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (München: Edition Text &

scrutiny, however, one finds that the protagonist is indeed following her husband Rolf's earlier recommendation "befass dich mit der Gegenwart," (p. 29) but she is doing this indirectly, for only via a re-examination of, and coming to terms with the past can she achieve a satisfactory present state of mind.

Although this is not explicitly stated in the text, two points do support this implication; firstly, apart from the divorce and resultant separation from Rolf, there are as yet no signs of dramatic change in the protagonist, or her way of life. If anything, the developments (returning to the parental, patriarchal home) are regressive at this stage. She is in what could be termed a transitionary phase at the time of narration, but this particular transitionary phase is not yet as progressive as that of Veruschka in *Häutungen*. The retrospection of the narrative is therefore a clear attempt by the narrator to form an individual identity from which to progress, and the fact that the transitionary period is less established than that of Veruschka also accounts for the greater sense of immediacy and the more extensive use of the present tense to relate past events. Secondly, there is, once again, no clearly definable conclusion to the novel, apart from the protagonist's actual realisation that she has so far been the victim of a trick. Yet, this recognition of her self-delusion and the part played by others in that delusion, has only come about because of her concern with the past, and, whether it is viewed positively or negatively, this simple statement can be taken as the basis for a new approach to life from this point on, proving that this "Rückschau" is of very current value, in that it has what Heinz Puknus calls "[einen] selbsttherapeutische[n] Effekt."[127] This is also implied in the text, via Karl, the only male figure the protagonist can really understand:

> Er macht Notizen, weil ihm das Leben erträglicher wird, wenn er Teile daraus hin und wieder beschreiben kann. Weil er beim Aufschreiben zum genaueren Empfinden und Denken kommt. Er glaubt, dass Menschen schriftlich besser mit sich reden lassen als mündlich. (p. 68)

The present tense, as used in *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* is apparently considered simultaneous present-tense narration by Hans Wolfschütz, taking into account his phrase "die

---

[126](cont'd) Kritik, 1978).
[127] Puknus, p. 231.

Gegenwartshandlung," and the fact that he only mentions "Kindheit und Jugend" as memories from the past, and not the unhappy marriage. Yet, it is, in fact, still being used to describe past events, since the marriage is already over before the book begins to relate the wedding-day procedures. We are, therefore, usually confronted with an evocative present again in this work, and Hans Wolfschütz' comment can hence be considered a testimony to the undoubted immediacy produced by the writer in her extensive and skilful use of this time-frame. The intensity of this sense of "Unmittelbarkeit" is ignored completely by Käte Hamburger, when she dismisses the effect of Gerhart Hauptmann's tense use in *Griechischer Frühling* as no different to when the present tense alternates with the preterite. The comments of Wayne C.Booth, however, sum up the efficacity of prolonged pesent-tense narration in the work of Alain Robbe-Grillet very precisely thus:

> We should be careful . . . not to underrate the technical achievement of modern authors as they have created degrees of psychic and physical vividness that would have been the envy of many earlier writers. Whenever such vividness is appropriate to the intended effect of the whole work, the new devices can prove useful. They can be sustained throughout a whole work, unmediated by any interpreting mind, if the work is short and if the emotions and ideas dealt with are simple. The author who, like Alain Robbe-Grillet, wants us to receive the very touch and feel of murderous jealousy, can now do so with an intensity that is almost unbearable. Simply by confining us to the sensations and thoughts of the disintegrating husband in '*Jealousy*', Robbe-Grillet can make us experience a concentration of sensation impossible in any other mode.[128]

And the following randomly selected passages from *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* illustrate well the ability of the writer to evoke a more vivid picture, by the use of this tense, than would otherwise be possible:

> Gutbürgerlich, vor dem Spiegel im Schlafzimmer meiner Eltern, gutbürgerlich, das ist das wichtigste. Grossmutter sagt es mit Nachdruck. . . . Ein Reissverschluss klemmt. Es ist heiss, . . . Mutter zwängt sich ins Kleid. Der Stoff hat sich im Reissverschluss verfangen. Immer diese Fetzen, sagt Vater. Das ist kein Fetzen, sagt Grossmutter, das ist ein guter Stoff. Sie reibt den Saum zwischen den Fingern. Wieso immer, fragt Mutter. (p. 7)

> Das Zimmer ist noch immer da, als ich die Augen aufmache, die Schwere auf meiner Brust, diese trockene Luft. Ich schleiche zum Vorhang, da ist wirklich ein Fenster, und frischer Schnee liegt draussen, es hat also geschneit. (p. 21)

> Rolf hat recht. Blitz hat keinen Schirm. Auch verbreitet unser Hund einen zu starken

---

[128] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 62.

> Geruch nach Hund, wenn er durchnässt unter der Zentralheizung liegt. Ich werde also Blitz zu Hause lassen. Aber der sitzt schon im Vorzimmer, weil ich mit dem Schlüssel das Geräusch gemacht habe, das er kennt. Er wartet schon. (p. 62)

In employing this tense to such good effect, Brigitte Schwaiger goes some way to achieving the underlying purpose of her narrative, namely, to depict a feminine awareness and demonstrate to the reader how an individual female mind may react to certain situations in order to comprehend them. For, by leading the reader through a series of (not necessarily chronological) experiences at close hand, and guiding her/him toward a conclusion which is almost inevitable - but not explicitly stated, she appears to make excellent use of the specifically female rhetorical technique of "indirection," described earlier by Thomas Farrell. He says, notably, "The 'indirection' of the female mode . . . tries to simulate how one might actually reason to a conclusion,"[129] and may just as well have been referring to this novel in adding:

> The "indirection" of the female mode seems to proceed without a readily recognizable plan. . . . The ideas seem less processed and controlled in the female mode than in the male mode and hence come closer to recreating the process of thinking as it normally occurs in real life, where thinking is as much a matter of unconscious as of conscious processes.[130]

As was the case in Verena Stefan's *Häutungen*, the versatility of the present tense is also utilised by Brigitte Schwaiger. As the narrative advances towards the narrator's writing present, the tense is used more in its punctual sense, with phrases such as "ich bin jetzt bei meinen Eltern zu Besuch" (p. 120), "ich erinnere mich" (p. 120), and "ich weiss noch" (p. 121) etc., stressing its contemporaneity. This sense of actuality is also accentuated by the frequency of the word "jetzt," which occurs no less than seven times in the space of three pages (pp. 118-20).

The final note of *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* is one of continuation and duration *ad infinitum*, "und das Bild klebt im Album. Alles Trick." (p. 121) We are left in little doubt about the stagnancy of the current situation, as a result of this use of a durative present combined with a verbless thought. This mood of stability and tedious inertia is present in much

---

[129] Farrell, p. 909.
[130] *Ibid.*, p. 910.

of the main section of the novel as an integral part of the protagonist's married life, and is brought out to the full by the writer's adroit use of the durative present in combination with verbless thoughts and repeated infinitives. The following lightly satirical passage illustrates this slow, monotonous atmosphere particularly well:

> Beruf: Hausfrau, steht in meinem neuen Pass. Schnecke hätten sie besser geschrieben. Schnecke. Haare: gefärbt. Augen: braun. Besondere Kennzeichen: keine, steht im Pass. Und ob. Man sieht sie nur nicht auf den ersten Blick. Besondere Kennzeichen: schlampig, ungerecht, undankbar, untüchtig, unrealistisch, unfroh, unzufrieden, faul, frech. Tisch decken, Tisch abräumen, Geschirr spülen, einkaufen, kochen, Tisch decken, Tisch abräumen. Geschirr spülen. Was koche ich zum Abendessen, dreihundertfünfundsechzigmal im Jahr die Frage: was koche ich zum Abendessen? Sein oder Nichtsein, ob's edler im Gemüt, was kosten jetzt die Tomaten? Das musst du doch wissen, ob jetzt Tomatenzeit ist oder nicht. (p. 33)

Life appears to be moving so slowly for the protagonist that at this stage it would almost be possible to synchronise the act of writing with life's passage. Nevertheless, the narrator certainly seems to have been able to achieve here what Virginia Woolf terms "[a] state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back,"[131] and the present tense no doubt contributes to this fluidity.

It is perhaps not possible to talk of Brigitte Schwaiger in such definitive terms as Dorrit Cohn uses to discuss Nathalie Sarraute, in saying:

> Like other twentieth-century novelists she prefers to search for more direct methods within the first-person mode itself - notably to experiment with "simultaneous" forms that abandon past-tense narration altogether in favor of present-tense discourse.[132]

- since there are certain reflections in Schwaiger's narrative, which are in the past tense and distanced from the rest of this 'semi-reality' to which we are being exposed via the thoughts of the "Romanheldin," for example, in the following quotation of a childhood memory which is flashing through the main character's mind, "Zu Mittag herrschte immer Nervosität, die aus der Stimme und den Gesten meiner Mutter spürbar wurde, wenn Vater sich an den Tisch gesetzt hatte." (p. 36) Yet, overall, it is nevertheless true to say that the significant use of the present tense in this novel, in addition to the proven popularity of the work, is further evidence supportive of the earlier hypothesis, that this time-frame is being used by many feminist writers,

---

[131] Woolf, p. 93.
[132] Cohn, p. 154.

and appears to be assisting the development of a prose style expressive of female consciousness.

3.2 Third-person texts - Eva Zeller and Ingeborg Drewitz

Having so far established the tendency towards present-tense narration evident in the first-person mode, and considered the resultant increased immediacy, whereby the reader is led, at first hand, through the thought development process of an "Ich-Erzählerin," being drawn in to such an extent that he/she actually takes an active part in this process, it will be of interest at this stage to continue the analysis in a similar vein, by comparing the use of tense in certain third-person novels of this genre.

Owing to the initial propensity among feminist writers to autobiographical and first-person narration, explained earlier as an attempt to develop and secure a sense of identity, both literary and personal, in the form of a female 'I', the third-person mode was, it seems, originally neglected. Various writers have, nevertheless, since shown a clear preference for this style in their work, notably Eva Zeller and Ingeborg Drewitz. In addition to exploiting the advantages of this time-frame detailed so far, the third-person texts exhibit slightly different nuances of meaning and effect in their use of the present tense, signifying, if anything, a more radical turn away from tradition.

3.2.1 Eva Zeller: Die Hauptfrau

Set in the "Mittelstandsmilieu,"[133] *Die Hauptfrau*[134] is another work involving a separation, a common theme in *Frauenliteratur*. The narrative itself focuses on the new-found independence and fulfilment of the main character, Nele Dehio, following her seemingly long-overdue decision to leave her husband, Herbert, after twenty years of marriage and tolerating at least three years of his infidelity. At the time of narration, the couple has been separated for almost a year. The book ends with a visit, at short notice, by Herbert to the

---

[133] Ingeborg Drewitz, "Eva Zeller: '*Die Hauptfrau*'," *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, 4 (1977), p. 825.

[134] All further references to this book are found in the edition indicated in Chapter 1.

apartment in the "Schwarzwald," where Nele now lives, resulting in an attempt by Nele to demonstrate her new defiance by rejecting Herbert and leaving for Paris with another man.

The novel is essentially divided into two parts, or more exactly, two spheres. More distinctly than in the first-person novels, where there was often a coincidence of past and present events in the mind of the protagonist, we find a clear division between these two realms of experience in this text. This distinction is maintained by the author/narrator's choice of tense. On the surface this technique does not seem at all innovative, since authors, such as Günter Grass, use the epic preterite to narrate 'current' happenings in the fictitious world,[135] and the historic present, or perfect tense to describe events from the past.[136] A closer examination of Eva Zeller's tense use shows, however, a marked divergence from this pattern.

This text is, indeed, an excellent example of the apparent reversal in narrative technique, which was referred to earlier, since the narrated action takes place in the present tense, for example, "Sie giesst sich Pulverkaffee auf und erschrickt, als die Brotscheiben aus dem Toaster springen." (p. 7) Whereas the protagonist's recollections of times past are set in the preterite, such as, "In Neles Erinnerung ist diese Giebelstube vornehmlich der Raum, in dem sie viele Nächte wach lag und auf Herbert wartete." (p. 42)

As was the case in the first-person novels, one of the effects created by this dominant present-tense narration is immediacy. The actions which are described in this time-frame are automatically brought closer to the reader, and those memories and explanations of unhappy past occurrences are, of course, set back at a distance by the preterite. In spite of this ostensibly logical arrangement, the combination of third-person and present-tense narration here gives rise to a distinct note of incongruity. This occurs partly as a result of traditional influences, which compel the reader of a fictional piece of prose to expect the usual combination, i.e., third-person and past-tense narration, and partly because within this new technique there occurs a confrontation between what is essentially a distanced narrative perspective (third

---

[135] See Käte Hamburger *Die Logik der Dichtung*, in particular, the section entitled "Das epische Präteritum," where she explains the combination of this tense with deictic adverbs.

[136] See note no.91.

person), and the immediate present tense.

In the first-person mode this incongruity is less likely to occur for two reasons; firstly, the narrative perspective is more direct, and secondly, instances of the combination of "Ich" with a present tense are quite commonly found in the works of many male authors who employ the stylistic device known as interior monologue. Having said that, there are, however, occasions where an "Ich-Erzähler(in)" using a present tense (which is not historic or evocative) to narrate past events, can produce an unusual effect. A clear example of this is *Eis auf der Elbe*[137] by Ingeborg Drewitz, a diary-form novel, where the author/narrator chooses the present tense to record the daily entries, even though it is clear that the actions being described are not concurrent, but have already taken place.

One reason why writers, such as Eva Zeller, prefer to accept the confrontation of distanced third-person and vivid present-tense narration, is, perhaps, the fact that it allows them the optimum conditions needed to achieve a close simultaneity between the narrative and the action. As a result of the objective perspective and the direct presentation (present tense), the writer can create a "fly-on-the-wall" impression of simultaneity, and since we have no transformation to a "non-reality,"[138] as understood by Käte Hamburger, the sense of actuality is intensified. This is evident here in the opening lines of the novel:

> Der Werbesprospekt versichert den Käufern und Mietern der LUNA-Appartments, dass an besonders klaren Tagen die Alpen sich zeigen würden. Ein Bauprojekt, das für sich in Anspruch nimmt, beispiellos und zukunftsweisend zu sein und einen überdurchschnittlichen Wohn- und Freizeitwert zu gewährleisten, bietet darüberhinaus höchstmöglichen Komfort fürs Auge. . . . Eins der dreihundertsechzig LUNA-Appartments . . . hat Nele als Eigentumswohnung erworben, . . . Jeden Morgen tritt sie an das Südfenster im Wohnzimmer und inspiziert den Horizont, vorausgesetzt, ein Horizont ist überhaupt zu sehen. (p. 5)

The book, if divided into two halves, shows more reflection and retrospection by Nele in the first part, as she tries to come to terms with the break-up and the infidelity of her husband, all contained within the framework of the new life she is now leading. As the work progresses, Nele becomes more and more at home in her new situation, "die Erinnerung

---

[137] Ingeborg Drewitz, *Eis auf der Elbe* (Düsseldorf: Claassen Verlag, 1982).
[138] Pascal, "Tense and Novel," p. 3.

erschöpft sich." (p. 110) And the narrative parallels her development, as it too becomes gradually more engaged in her present. It is at this stage that the sense of simultaneity begins to increase, for example, as we accompany Nele on a walk in the woods:

> Jetzt im Herbst ist ein Tag so schön wie der andere. . . . Nele bleibt nicht lange auf markierten Wanderwegen, auf Naturlehrpfaden und Trimm-Dich-Strecken. Wo im Wald die Bäume nicht nahe zusammenstehen, das Unterholz nicht dicht ist, geht sie quer waldein. . . . Hatte sie nicht ihren Tränen freien Lauf lassen, Selbstgespräche halten wollen? Aber Worte und Gedanken haben in der Stille ihre Kraft verloren. (p. 77)

The pace of the narrative increases after Nele has met Melanie, another divorced woman who lives in the same apartment block. Present-tense narration is maintained, but this period of satisfaction and general fulfilment is not dwelt upon by Eva Zeller. Indeed, she condenses a whole summer into two sentences, "Ein Sommer mit Melanie. Die Woche über arbeiten sie und begutachten abends gegenseitig, was sie getan haben." (p. 108)

The narrative slows down again after the announcenent of Herbert's imminent arrival, "Herbert kündigt seinen Besuch für morgen an" (p. 113), with the following forty-four pages describing only two days. Eva Zeller skilfully builds up the sense of expectation by her simultaneous narration, and her description of Nele's now confused and nervously expectant state of mind. Various narrative techniques are used, in order to depict the constant state of flux between memory and speculation which arises at this crucial time in Nele's consciousness, - techniques such as "psycho-narration" and "erlebte Rede," for example, which, as Dorrit Cohn states, "is a choice medium for revealing a fictional mind suspended in an instant present, between a remembered past and an anticipated future."[139] This idea of 'suspension in the present' is made all the more instantaneous by the present tense, and the stress placed here on the deictic adverbs, "morgen" and "vorgestern."

In considering this instantaneous atmosphere further, it is interesting to note that even Käte Hamburger seems to acknowledge an allied effect, by attributing the adjective "filmisch" to the present-tense "Reiseschilderung," in her discussion of Hauptmann's *Griechischer*

---

[139] Cohn, p. 126.

Frühling.[140] This linkage of a present-tense narrative with a film, seems to describe the impression created here by Eva Zeller quite accurately, for once again it seems that a female writer is breaking down barriers, or on this occasion, crossing interdisciplinary borders. The reader here is placed in a similar frame of mind to the film-viewer, since he/she is, as a result of the sustained illusion, almost simultaneously watching the unfolding of events. It is hardly surprising that the writers of feminist novels should try to reproduce certain advantageous features of this very influential medium, as, for instance, does the politically-engaged Günter Grass quite clearly in his recent work *Kopfgeburten: oder, Die Deutschen sterben aus*.[141] In fact, during the early period of growing feminist awareness in Germany, films themselves were a popular means of female expression, particularly as part of the debate concerning abortion in the early 1970s.[142]

Returning to the text, it becomes clear that Eva Zeller wishes the narrative to possess certain film-like qualities, since in the final ten pages there is explicit reference to three separate films. First of all, Nele likens her immediate present to a scene in an unfinished film. Sitting with her unexpected guest, the father of her sister's child, she thinks, "Wenn die Szene nur nicht wie im Kino wäre, oder nein, unfertiger, wie in einem Filmatelier, wo Kameras schnurren, Scheinwerfer auf einen gerichtet sind." (p. 147) Later on, while pondering the possible outcome of Herbert's visit, the "Fernsehspiel des Monats von vorgestern abend" (p. 149) comes to her mind, and in this instance she seems to draw a warning for her future conduct from the film, "Nein, Nele wird auf der Hut sein. Bei ihr wird der Mechanismus, der einem Leiden erspart, diesmal rechtzeitig einsetzen." (p. 151) Finally, we see Nele liken one of Herbert's previous hurtful statements to a line from a film she once saw, "Jetzt, wo Herbert im Sessel sitzt, scheint es nur noch ein Satz aus einem Film zu sein, den Nele einmal gesehen hat." (p. 156)

---

[140] See note no.83.

[141] Günter Grass, *Kopfgeburten: oder, Die Deutschen sterben aus* (Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1980).

[142] Renate Möhrmann gives the titles and details of a number of these films in her essay, "Feministische Trends in der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur," p. 337.

These three specific mentions of films within the text merit brief analysis, for they appear to show a vague parallel to the novel, in that they all correspond to different time levels - present, future and past, and the whole story is, of course, a constant fluctuation between these different levels. Indeed, as the following quotation from the text indicates, making a film often involves reshuffling temporal relationships:

> Sie [Nele] erinnert sich, dass die nicht chronologische Art dieses Vorgehens sie durcheinandergebracht hatte: dass man mit dem Anfang aufhören konnte, dass man vorwegnehmen, nachtragen oder vorher und nachher gleichsetzen konnte, künftige Erinnerungen haben, gewesene Erwartungen; und ein Bild zum Standfoto erstarrt, Gegenwart vortäuschen konnte. Die Zeit war aufgehoben; (p. 147)

And the similarity with the fragmentary structure of the narrative as a whole in the following vision of a film which Nele has is too unmistakable to be coincidental:

> Laut Drehbuch hatte Albert nun zu sagen, dass er auch schon seit geraumer Zeit von seiner Frau getrennt lebe, zwar bedauerlicherweise noch im selben Haus, aber eben getrennt; seine Frau sei überdies vollauf mit ihrem Beruf als Bühnenbildnerin befasst. ("Meine Frau verkriecht sich in ihrem sogenannten Atelier", hatte es bei Herbert geheissen.) Thema con variatione. Mit Klischees bestückte Dialoge. Herbert, nein Albert, mixt einen Drink. Die Kamera schwenkt bald auf seinen Mund, bald auf seine Hosenbeine oder Schuhe oder folgt Nele, wie sie ans Fenster tritt. Draussen hört man den Wind die Bänder besingen. Szenen zwischen Herbert und Denise werden eingeblendet. Meine Frau ist in ihrem Atelier, sei unbesorgt. Im Dunkeln gedrehte Szenen bei aufgerissener Linse. Nahaufnahmen. (p. 148)

In these final pages it also becomes clear that the phenomenon of continuity, noted earlier in connection with the first-person texts, is evident here too. Not only is there no distinct conclusion, Eva Zeller uses additional subtle means to indicate the fact that this particular situation is very actual and on-going, rather than at an end. First of all, the use of the term "unfertig," (p. 147) as part of Nele's thoughts on the scene she seems to be acting out with Albert, emphasises the incomplete nature of this whole episode in her life, and secondly, the allusion to the actuality of the final scene, incorporated in the phrase, "dass . . . ein Bild zum Standfoto erstarrt, Gegenwart vortäuschen konnte" (p. 147), is not difficult to see, especially when this comment is considered in comparison with the very static, open-ended 'frame' with which we are left at the end of the narrative, "Sie [Nele and Herbert] sehen sich einen ziemlich langen Augenblick an wie Kinder, die Wer-zuckt-zuerst-mit-der-Wimper spielen." (p. 157)

The intensity of this final scene is evident, and it seems that, in spite of the different shades of effect, (such as those discussed in this section, namely, increased simultaneity and, perhaps, incongruity, resulting from the change in perspective - from first- to third-person) the present-tense narration, predominant in *Frauenliteratur* as a whole, has a universal function, in that it enables the writers to tackle very actual concerns, and portray them using a very intense style. As will be seen in the following section, this intensity becomes even more apparent in the novel *Das Hochhaus*, by Ingeborg Drewitz.

3.2.2 Ingeborg Drewitz: Das Hochhaus

It is quite possible ~~that~~ the increased intensity and actuality, which soon become evident in *Das Hochhaus*,[143] are due, in part, to the important thematic difference between it and the other works considered so far. Whereas, in the previous texts, we saw the attempts of individuals to understand the present situation, using a certain amount of retrospection, the reader of this novel is almost totally immersed in the social reality of a modern Berlin high-rise block, as Ingeborg Drewitz portrays the lives of a cross-section of its tenants over a period of seven days. These seven days clearly represent any week, in any high-rise, in any West German city, since one of the main themes in the book is the feeling of constancy in such a building, and this can, of course, be expanded to include society as a whole ~~and the~~ permanent nature of certain human traits.

The other major theme here is the isolation in society, which appears much more serious in such a "Wohnmaschine."[144] In order to depict the anonymity and hostility in this environment, Ingeborg Drewitz chooses to highlight a whole range of typical characters from various social strata, such as two single-parent families, one with a working mother, and her teenage son, Peter, whose father is in prison for radical political activities, the other a widowed

---

[143] All further references to this book are found in the 1983 edition, published in München by the Goldmann Verlag. Page numbers for direct quotations will be given in parentheses.

[144] Werner Wien, "Nur die Kinder proben hier die Gemeinschaft. Ingeborg Drewitz' Roman *Das Hochhaus* schildert detailliert neues Berliner Milieu." *Bremer Nachrichten*, 16.1.1976.

script-writer, whose wayward son, Jockel, causes him much anguish. There is also a bus-driver and his large family, a director of a large company, his wife, and their daughter Susanne, a parish minister and the "Hausverwalter." Within this broad scope, the narrative focuses on one particular strand which runs through the text, namely, the life and eventual violent death of Peter's mother, who is attacked, raped, and killed, when she attempts to break away from her routine existence.

The reviews of various critics have commented upon the effects created by Ingeborg Drewitz' prose, and most tend, either directly or indirectly, to stress the aspects mentioned above. Werner Wien, for example, notes the almost dramatic quality of the work, in his phrase, "das Hochhaus als Zeigebühne für ein episches Theater des sozialen Realismus."[145] Christine Koller emphasises the book's intensity, when she says, "die Erzählung macht uns zu Teilnehmern einer Daseinsroutine."[146] And even Werner Strodthoff, in his rather negative critique, points out the simultaneity achieved by the "Schlüssellochperspective," which, in his words, allows the writer and the reader "fast *gleichzeitig* am Küchentisch oder im Kinder- bzw. Schlafzimmer der vorgeführten Familie zu hospitieren." [my emphasis][147]

Nobody, however, seems to come to terms with the reasons behind this impact, and, since the content in itself does not provide sufficient evidence for these observations, the answer must lie in the author's style. The novel is, in fact, an even clearer example of the 'tense-reversal' technique, which was noted earlier in Eva Zeller's *Die Hauptfrau*. Narrated in the third person, with the exception of occasional dialogues and passages of interior monologue, and in the present tense throughout, *Das Hochhaus* is the prose equivalent of the removal of the fourth wall on stage. The simultaneity and immersion in the present situation in evidence here are wholly dependent on the tense, i.e., the present tense. Werner Wien does comment, in passing, on the question of time in the text, "die für eine Woche von Tag zu Tag

---

[145] *Ibid.*
[146] Christine Koller, "Ingeborg Drewitz' *Das Hochhaus*," *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, 4 (1976), p. 825.
[147] Werner Strodthoff, "Vereinzelung in der Stadt als verfehltes Thema: Ingeborg Drewitz' Roman *Das Hochhaus*," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 30.1.1976.

verfolgten Verhaltensweisen der Mieterparteien *bleiben im zeitlichen Kontinuum*, auch wenn die Räume wechseln." [my emphasis][148] Yet he does not link this point directly to his earlier observation on the novel's theatrical character.

Since the technique of present-tense narration pervades the entire text, a list of sample occurrences would serve no demonstrative purpose. At this point, therefore, I would simply like to quote the opening and closing paragraphs instead, thus providing a brief illustration of the immediate effect and almost 'stage-direction' quality of this formula:

> Er liegt auf dem Bauch, und die starren Halme pieken ihn. Sein Oberkörper ist nackt. Das Gesicht hat er in die linke Armbeuge gepresst. Riecht die eigene Haut, Staub, Schweiss, Salz, riecht den geschundenen Rasen. Einmal im Sommer ist der Hausmeister mit der Mähmaschine drüber gefahren, einmal hat es nach Sommer gerochen. Er hört die Kinder. . . . (p. 5)

And:

> Sie schämt sich, dass sie Vater hat reden lassen, aber sie schämt sich nicht, dass sie geweint hat. Jetzt sind da nur noch die Geräusche aus der Küche, die Stimme des Nachrichtensprechers. . . . Jetzt ist da nur noch Donnerstag abend. (p. 243)

In order to accentuate the authenticity and the scientific nature of her 'study,' Ingeborg Drewitz also employs two fairly innovative devices at the end of the narrative. First of all she includes two newspaper-cuttings, one reporting the discovery of a woman's body in Berlin after a sexual attack, and the other a report from the previous day of an accident involving a West German car in East Germany. In addition to this, the writer also provides a list of fourteen studies on living conditions in high-rise blocks in the form of a bibliography. The consequent essayistic objectivity implied here is no doubt supported by the fact that the 'study' is written in the present tense, since the often "unemphatic"[149] nature of this time-frame makes it the logical documentary tense.

The general impression left on the reader by this text, as a result of the combination of almost uninterrupted present-tense narration, theme, and other specific devices, such as depicting one representative week, is once again, but perhaps more so than before, one of concern for the here and now. There is, doubtless, an ominous sense of stagnant continuation in the

---

[148] Werner Wien, see note no.144.
[149] Pascal, "Tense and Novel," p. 7.

final sentence, "Jetzt ist da nur noch Donnerstag abend." (p. 243) As we have seen, few novels of the genre *Frauenliteratur* actually come to definite conclusions, and here, we are once more left suspended in the narrative present to ponder the immediate future. If this genre is to achieve its ultimate aim, and improve the situation as it stands, then this is exactly the type of effect it must have, for if it does not provoke an immediate reaction to the current state of affairs, it has lost its purpose as "littérature engagée."[150]

As was explained earlier, Roy Pascal recognised the possibility of present-tense narration for short fiction in his early essay "Tense and Novel," and went on later to provide an example of the function of this grammatical technique in his posthumous study of Kafka's short stories, "which broke new ground in the appreciation of that author's art."[151] The death of Roy Pascal meant that his analysis did not reach a conclusion, but the jottings which he made for that chapter have been included by the editors in the published analysis, and they express, in note form, precisely the effect which the use of the present tense produces as it is used in extended tales by the feminist writers discussed so far, and in particular here in *Das Hochhaus* by Ingeborg Drewitz. Roy Pascal's fragmentary notes on Kafka's short prose read as follows:

> The search for authenticity. The search for the appropriate narrative perspective, and for a story without definite contours, without fulfilment, endings, conclusions. An on-going situation, not a plot; the present tense not the past; immersion in the now, not retrospective understanding and judgement.[152]

The majority of these features are common to many feminist novels of the 1970s, including, for example, some of the works of Ingeborg Bachmann, Karin Struck, and Margot Schroeder, and are perhaps encapsulated in the title of Ingeborg Drewitz' major novel *Gestern war Heute. Hundert Jahre Gegenwart*,[153] where once again we find the author choosing this particular style in order to "present the continuity of women's experiences."[154]

---

[150] Möhrmann, see note no.5.
[151] Pascal, *Kafka's Narrators*, see "Prefatory Note."
[152] *Ibid.*, p. 236.
[153] Ingeborg Drewitz, *Gestern war Heute. Hundert Jahre Gegenwart* (Düsseldorf: Claassen Verlag, 1978).
[154] Weigel, p. 73.

3.3 A review of tense in "Frauenliteratur"

Having considered the use of tense in this sample selection of works from this genre, and established the existence of a definite trend here, with regard to the predominant use of the present tense for narration, it will now be worthwhile to evaluate this phenomenon and its effects, in order to ascertain whether a distinctly feminine literary style is manifesting itself in this way.

In connection with the earlier discussion of *Frauenliteratur* and its unique effect, I singled out three of the most commonly mentioned traits peculiar to the feminine literary style. These were the rejection of logical and linear presentation, the breaking down of certain barriers, and the quality of openness. In light of the preceding textual analysis, it is clear that the new tense scheme is an important factor in all these distinguishing features, and hence seems to contribute much to the vague and disputed concept of feminine literary style.

It is most likely true to say that men and women do have different temporal perspectives on certain matters. In order to illustrate this point one only has to look at the comments of Simone de Beauvoir on coition, which although, perhaps, a little out-dated, are nonetheless valid:

> Le coit ne saurait se produire sans le consentement mâle et c'est la satisfaction du mâle qui en est le terme naturel. La fécondation peut s'effectuer sans que la femme en éprouve aucun plaisir. D'autre part, la fécondation est bien loin de représenter pour elle l'achèvement du processus sexuel; c'est à ce moment au contraire que commence le service réclamé d'elle par l'espèce.[155]

It is, therefore, certainly feasible that such a difference in perspective could manifest itself in the literary production of women. These fundamentally different gender perspectives, and the resultant female focus on the present, become even more apparent when one considers the historical situation of women, as certain critics have already done. In so doing, it becomes clear that for women there is no "real" history as such, only, as was mentioned in connection with Ingeborg Drewitz' novel *Gestern war Heute. Hundert Jahre Gegenwart*, a continuity of female experience. Silvia Bovenschen refers to this lack of history in the following quotation:

---

[155] Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, vol.II (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1949), p. 133.

> Dieser spezifische Präsenzmodus des Weiblichen wurde, wie gesagt, nur sehr selten reflektiert - er verweist auf eine Geschichte, die fremd und zugleich die eigene ist: fremd insofern, als sie nicht oder gänzlich unzulänglich überliefert wurde, die eigene insofern, als auch die Opfer ihre Verstrickung in den Geschichtsprozess nicht leugnen können.[156]

There is not only a lack of political history as far as women are concerned, for until recently there was, of course, no literary tradition from this perspective either. This fact, combined with the point made by Liselotte Weingant, that "powerlessness does not allow for a future perspective in female characters,"[157] seems to strengthen the idea that women's literature should show a concentration on the present-day feminine emotions, and use the present tense as the natural time-frame in which to impart this awareness.

A glance at the following statement by Dorrit Cohn, in talking of a passage in Nathalie Sarraute's *Martereau*, illustrates to what extent tense can affect the mood of a text, "Beginning and ending in durative present, passing through hopeless conditional and negative future, the tenses . . . shape the stagnancy of its speaker's predicament."[158] This effect, as well as the one noted below by Roy Pascal in *Mister Johnson*, emphasise the value of this technique for *Frauenliteratur*:

> The outstanding effect of the use of the present tense throughout this novel is in fact a psychological one. It establishes Mister Johnson as a person who lives in a world without a past in a true sense; . . . Everything he thinks and does is now, dislocated, rootless; he is a character without a continuous past.[159]

Indeed, he goes on to say:

> Thus the present tense of this novel has a precise function, intimately linked with Cary's purpose of depicting a particular psychological type as a representative of a whole significant social situation. This function is temporal too, . . . in the sense that it establishes a character for whom the present is all.[160]

And this is, after all, precisely the purpose and effect of *Frauenliteratur*.

---

[156] Silvia Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit: Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 264.
[157] Liselotte Weingant, "Das Bild des Mannes im Frauenroman der siebziger Jahre," Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1981, see abstract.
[158] Cohn, p. 193.
[159] Pascal, "Tense and Novel," p. 10.
[160] *Ibid.*

However, Pascal's observation does not necessarily mean, of course, that present-tense narration is a purely feminine narrative tool, for, as Virginia Woolf stated, "Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the art of creation can be accomplished."[161] Yet, it may well be that this time-frame is the appropriate one for expressing a feminine awareness. That is not to say that cetain male authors have not employed this technique in their short stories and novels, as we have seen in the case of Franz Kafka and Alain Robbe-Grillet, but it is intriguing to note, along with Brigitte Wartmann, that some of those males who do use this tense are, coincidentally, often said to have a feminine style:

> Nicht zufällig ist in der Diskussion um eine "weibliche" Schreibweise nicht mehr nur von Frauen, die über eine solche Schreibweise verfügen, die Rede, sondern auch von männlichen Künstlern wie Joyce, Kafka oder Mallarmé, die "weiblich" schreiben.[162]

---

[161] Woolf, p. 99.
[162] Wartmann, p. 118.

4. The Presentation of Consciousness in "Frauenliteratur"

> Der Feminismus ist keine Partei und keine Organisation, sondern Ausdruck eines Bewusstseins.[163]
>
> Die Frau kann das neue Verhältnis zu sich nur über andere Frauen entwickeln. Die Frau wird der Frau zum lebendigen Spiegel, in dem sie sich verliert und wiederfindet. Das so entstehende Verhältnis der Frau zu sich ist so neu, dass es noch nicht definiert werden kann.[164]
>
> mich interessierten die ängste der frauen, nicht die der männer.[165]

In his reply to the article entitled "Das epische Präteritum" by Käte Hamburger,[166] Herbert Seidler[167] criticises the reduction of the argument concerning the effect of fiction to the function of verbs, quite justifiably stating that the reader's response is not limited to this aspect alone, but that, on the contrary, many other stylistic factors play important roles in determining the individual's reception of a work.

This is doubtless a valid point, and in order to show that the distinctive tone of *Frauenliteratur* is, of course, not restricted to the use of tense, I now intend to vary the course of this discussion slightly to consider a more content-oriented element, namely, the application of consciousness techniques within this genre, since it is my opinion that there is a clear and important departure from tradition in the feminist writers' employment of these techniques. In order to exemplify this departure, I will once again make use of the previous representative sample of *Frauenliteratur*, illustrating the fact that the aspects of stylistic development, which I have chosen to highlight, are by no means mutually exclusive, nor are they limited to one particular writer.

The following analysis will be more concise than that of the previous chapter, which by no means reflects a simplicity in what is, indeed, a very complex field, consciousness-

---

[163] Alice Schwarzer, *Der 'kleine Unterschied' und seine grossen Folgen*, p. 235.
[164] Elisabeth Lenk, "Die sich selbst verdoppelnde Frau," *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, 25 (September 1976), p. 87.
[165] *Häutungen*, p. 57.
[166] Käte Hamburger, "Das epische Präteritum," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgechichte*, 27 (1953), pp. 329-57.
[167] Herbert Seidler, "Dichterische Welt und epische Zeitgestaltung," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 29 (1955), pp. 390-413.

presentation. In fact, the reason for this is simply that it is not my intention to question the theoretical aspects of the techniques, as Dorrit Cohn does in her comprehensive work *Transparent Minds*.[168] This discussion will, however, concentrate on a rather more practical issue, namely, the gender-specific manipulation of these narrative tools which occurs in *Frauenliteratur*. That is to say, within this genre, it appears that the presentation of consciousness is often limited almost exclusively to the female characters, with male reflection, by its absence, forming a stark contrast to the deep and involute female thought. Brigitte Wartmann notes this different perspective, calling it "Schreiben mit dem Blick feministischer Parteilichkeit,"[169] but does not explain how it is produced.

Before turning to the effects of this phenomenon and considering the reasons for it, I would like to briefly outline the scope of the major techniques, which an author has at his/her disposal, and discuss their significance. In her study, Dorrit Cohn divides the possibilities of presenting a stream-of-consciousness into three main areas, and then goes on to subdivide these techniques into various smaller and more precise groups. For the purpose of this analysis, however, it is sufficient to recognise the three important areas which she uses as her base, namely, "psycho-narration" (her "neologism"[170]), "quoted (or, interior) monologue," and "narrated monologue" (also known as "erlebte Rede"). These three stylistic devices represent the greater part of the means available to writers for the portrayal of a character's psyche, and can all be used in alternation within any one text.

The term "psycho-narration" is applied by Dorrit Cohn to the objective reporting of a figure's consciousness by a distanced narrator. This, she says, is not a method for presenting mental language, because it is indirect, in the sense that we are not receiving the character's thoughts directly from his/her perspective, but rather via the narrator. A characteristic of this technique is the prevalence of mental verbs, such as "he thought," or "she knew," etc. "Quoted (or, interior) monologue" is at the other end of the spectrum of consciousness presentation,

---

[168] See note no.68.
[169] Wartmann, p. 116.
[170] Cohn, p. 11.

since in this method - usually signalled by first-person reference to the thinking self, with the present tense - we receive the mental language of a character very directly. This technique is very much in evidence in *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*. We find, for example, passages such as the following excerpt, where the fluidity of this method is also clearly illustrated:

> Es hat sich nichts geändert, nur die Moden ändern sich, und die Luft, die ich einatme, ist auch durch die Lungen der Gladiatoren geströmt, ich sitze auf Blut und in Blut, und Blut rinnt durch den Körper des Ansichtskartenverkäufers. (*Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*, p. 28)

And finally, there is the technique termed "narrated monologue" by Dorrit Cohn, and otherwise known as "erlebte Rede," which combines elements of both the above methods, in that it sits "astride narration and quotation."[171] Here, the narrator continues to report, but, in so doing, he/she temporarily assumes the perspective of one of the characters. The reader thus receives the thoughts of the character concerned (almost) verbatim, while the tense and third person of the narrative are maintained. This method is clearly distinguishable from the most direct ("quoted") method as a result of the different person and, usually, tense. It also differs from "psycho-narration," in that there are no mental verbs here. A form of "erlebte Rede" can be seen in the following passage from *Das Hochhaus*, however, since the narrative tense is present in this case (see previous chapter), we also have an old lady's thoughts narrated in the present, "Selbst der Herr Pfarrer macht da keine Ausnahme! Mit was für Leuten sie überhaupt zusammenkommt!" (*Das Hochhaus*, p. 166.)

The principal value of these techniques as far as the writer is concerned is, of course, that it is possible to build up a more rounded picture of a particular character, by revealing his/her innermost thoughts and emotions. Their use has thus increased quite dramatically as the modern novel has begun to turn more and more towards the presentation of linguistic structures of awareness. This trend, which originated with such innovative authors as James Joyce and Marcel Proust, is also evident in *Frauenliteratur*. Indeed, the 1970s saw quite a radical movement in this direction within German literature as a whole, with such terminology as "neue Subjektivität" and "neue Innerlichkeit" being coined and applied to these developments.

---

[171] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

In her essay "Feministische Trends in der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur," however, Renate Möhrmann disputes the rash categorisation of *Frauenliteratur* within this general movement, emphasising that, whereas this tendency was often and quite justifiably termed a "Rückzug ins Private," for female writers it actually represented a "*Vor-Zug*" [her italics][172] since they had no literary precedents, and were therefore breaking completely new ground.

The utilisation by feminist writers of the various methods for presenting consciousness seems to support this observation, for, in using them only to depict a feminine consciousness, and hence choosing to refuse an in-depth analysis of the male psyche, they are making a dual break with tradition; firstly, in their restricted application of the techniques, and secondly, because the genuine female awareness presented here differs from the portrayal of a female psyche by a male author, in that it is doubtless more authentic. Renate Möhrmann indicates the general change in attitude along these lines when she says:

> Feministische Autorinnen wollen Geschichte nicht mehr aus der Perspektive eines Oskar Matzerath, eines Anselm Kristlein oder Siggi Jepsen erfahren, sondern aus der Sicht ihrer Geschlechtsgenossinnen.[173]

The effects of this concentration on the female perspective are evident in three of the four novels examined so far, namely, those by Verena Stefan, Brigitte Schwaiger, and Eva Zeller. The use of "erlebte Rede" and interior monologue in *Das Hochhaus* by Ingeborg Drewitz does extend to both genders, but may be considered quite exceptional, since even other novels by her, such as *Eis auf der Elbe*, do restrict the use of consciousness techniques to the female characters. The reason for this particular anomaly is perhaps the fact that this text is thematically different from many texts in the genre, for it deals with broader social issues, and not simply the question of women, or a specific woman, in society. In the other three texts, however, the reader is, for the most part, only confronted with a feminine awareness. According to Hilde Schmölzer, "Brigitte Schwaiger drückt Seelenzustände aus, ihre Romane sind psychologische Epigramme."[174] Yet her observation would perhaps be more valid if she

---

[172] Möhrmann, p. 341.
[173] *Ibid.*, p. 350.
[174] Hilde Schmölzer, *Frau sein und schreiben. Osterreichische Schriftstellerinnen definieren sich selbst* (Wien: österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1982), p. 137.

specified that Brigitte Schwaiger is concerned with specifically "weibliche Seelenzustände."

The clearest indications of male awareness which we have in these three works are the occasional reported statements from Samuel (*Häutungen*), Rolf (*Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*), and Herbert (*Die Hauptfrau*). The picture which the reader is able to form on the basis of isolated reported statements is inevitably of superficial nature, since we are never, or at least rarely given access to male doubts or justifications. Indeed, the direct quotations which we are given have been subjectively selected by the female characters, and usually accentuate the sense of superficiality which is already implicitly created by the omittance of male psychic portrayal, for example, the following quotation from Rolf:

> Führst du ein Tagebuch? . . . Warum sagst du nicht, dass du so etwas haben willst? Ich werde dir ein richtiges Tagebuch kaufen, mit Schlüsseln, dann kannst du deine kleinen Geheimnisse vor mir versperren. Hast du überhaupt Geheimnisse? Nein? Ist etwas passiert? Was schreibt man denn ins Tagebuch, wenn nichts passiert ist? (*Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*, p. 50)

And in Samuel's exclamation, knowing that Veruschka wants to terminate their relationship, "ich kann nicht ohne sein!" (*Häutungen*, p. 70)

Even in a work such as *Die Hauptfrau*, which devotes long passages to the consideration of actions and possible thoughts of a male character, we see little or no evidence, by means of directly imparted male mental language. Comments such as "Herbert will gar nicht geliebt werden" (*Die Hauptfrau*, p. 54), are patently mere speculation on the part of Nele and/or the narrator.

Apart from the resultant superficiality of male characters, this procedure of excluding males from the realm of consciousness presentation has another important effect. It produces an unopposed discussion of the issues involved - with the balance of power, for once, in favour of the female, in the form of the narrator. This, in turn means that the writers have a much easier task in creating the male "Feindbild," necessary for the continued affirmation of the feminist viewpoint. The "Feindbild" concept would, of course, be a lot less effective were the writers to offer any direct male justification or explanation, in the sense of fears, problems and doubts which may afflict the male psyche. This style, therefore, enables the writer to

concentrate wholly on the depiction of female awareness, in order to develop and reinforce the feminine identity.

Criticism can naturally be levelled at this approach, for it creates such imbalances that the negative male characteristics are occasionally so exaggerated as to appear far-fetched, with the result that in certain novels the men are depicted as 'thoughtless' caricatures.[175] Yet, when one considers the usual male approach, i.e., of presenting both male and female thoughts and emotions, it could just as easily be considered presumptuous and misrepresentational, for there we do not have the presentation of authentic female consciousness, but rather the invention of a pseudo-feminine mind, and the development of its thought processes.

It may well be, therefore, that no attempt is made by many feminist writers to enter or reproduce the mind of a man because they have intentionally decided not to make the same 'mistake' as many men have, in presuming themselves capable of seeing into, and portraying the mind of the opposite sex. And, indeed, one of the main reasons for the general trend towards "Innerlichkeit" and "Subjektivität" in the literature of the 1970s was, as Hans Christoph Buch stresses here, the desire to stop attempting to represent the second-hand experiences of others:

> Hören wir auf, stellvertretend für andere deren Erfahrungen zu beschreiben, die wir nur aus Büchern oder aus ein paar Wochen Fabrikarbeit kennen, schreiben wir über unsere eigenen Erfahrungen![176]

This statement is clearly a reaction to the "Industrieliteratur" of the late 1960s, but if it is applied to the gender-based literature of women in the mid-1970s, it becomes representative of the tendency toward a concentration on the authentic female self by many feminist writers.

It is also possible to define a third motive for this gender-specific application of consciousness techniques in *Frauenliteratur*, and one which stems from the texts themselves, or more specifically the situation of the female characters in many feminist texts. As becomes

---

[175] For a more detailed analysis of the depiction of male characters in the works of Brigitte Schwaiger (and other feminist writers, such as Karin Struck and Christa Reinig) cf. Liselotte Weingant, note no.157.

[176] Hans Christoph Buch, "Das Hervortreten des Ichs aus den Wörtern," in *Tintenfisch 8. Jahrbuch für Literatur*, eds. Michael Krüger and Klaus Wagenbach (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1975), p. 79.

quite clear in the works considered here, by Brigitte Schwaiger, Verena Stefan, and Eva Zeller, the protagonists have, in each case, been forced into isolation, either by an individual male (Rolf or Herbert), or alternatively, as a result of the (still intact) patriarchal society. It is therefore hardly surprising to find such a degree of introspection in these narratives. Anything else would clearly not concur with the narrators' circumstances.

In formulating general conclusions as to the reasons behind this noticeably unilateral presentation of consciousness, it is, I feel, only possible to suggest a conglomeration of the effects and reasons established so far, namely, the creation of a "Feindbild," the stress on authenticity, and the enforced isolation resulting in introspection. During this discussion I have presented these reasons in order of their descending significance, as I understand it, but this arrangement could, of course, differ as far as individual writers are concerned. To my knowledge, however, there has, as yet, been no comprehensive study of this problem, let alone one which has taken into account the opinions of the writers themselves, so this question must inevitably remain open, for the time-being at least. In spite of this, the fact remains that the trend exists, indeed, it is occasionally admitted to on an individual level, for instance, by Barbara Fiedler, who says, "In meinen Texten bleiben Kommunikationen, Gefühle, Gedankenaustausch den Frauen vorbehalten."[177] And, one way or another, it has an important effect on the reader, which is, moreover, most likely intended in a political sense.

---

[177] Barbara Fiedler, "Warum ich schreibe." *Schreiben, Frauenliteratur-Zeitung*, 1 (1977), p. 31. Quoted from Brigitte Wartmann, p. 116.

5. Conclusion

> Two aspects of [Christa] Wolf's style . . . deserve reiteration and expansion, because they are indicative of a new direction in prose writing. They are her insistence on the function of writing as a tool of social and personal emancipation and her focus on the centrality of experience for prose.[178]

The above comments on the prose style of Christa Wolf demonstrate a certain affinity with the two points highlighted in the preceding discussion of narrative technique in *Frauenliteratur*, for it has been shown that many feminist writers are - by their use of tense - undoubtedly exploiting the advantages of what is a very intense and effective style, in order to communicate a certain point of view to their readers, and that, in addition to this, what they are communicating is a purely feminine awareness, based on uniquely female experience.

It is my opinion that the two tendencies outlined above, with regard to the use of tense and consciousness in this genre, whether individually or combined, clearly provide the discussion of feminine aesthetics with decidedly more tenable concepts than those mentioned earlier,[179] whilst at the same time supporting and often illustrating these general preliminary observations. There can be little doubt that the techniques of present-tense narration and gender-restricted consciousness presentation are major factors in the peculiar "Lesererlebnis," which is often created by feminist texts. Furthermore, these technical adaptations of the novel, introduced by feminist writers in their struggle to develop new structures and hence discover an adequate means of expressing feminine awareness, seem to support the basic aims and intentions of feminist rhetoric, in so far as they contribute to the development of a new perspective. The need for a new perspective is expressed clearly by Brigitte Wartmann, who states:

> Um diese Blindheit der Geschichte gegenüber den kulturellen Fähigkeiten und Möglichkeiten der Frauen zu überwinden, ist es zunächst notwendig, dass Frauen einen eigenen - feministischen - Standort entwickeln, von dem aus sie mit einer neuen Optik die Welt betrachten.[180]

It is no doubt changes such as those considered which help to provide this "Standort," and

---

[178] Love, p. 46.
[179] See especially pp. 10 ff., where qualities such as "open," "non-logical" and "barrier-breaking" are attributed to feminist literary production.
[180] Wartmann, pp. 115-16.

Wartmann stresses the importance of these experiments as follows:

> Die Frage des feministischen Standortes der Literatur muss deshalb über die Mobilisierung bloss inhaltlicher Identifikationsmuster hinausgehen. Denn konsequenterweise muss eine feminine Lebenspraxis, d.h. auch eine feminine Schreibweise, nicht eine Gesellschaft ohne Männer, sondern eine Gesellschaft *ohne männliche Strukturen* anstreben - niemand kennt die Realität einer solchen Utopie. Die feministische Parteilichkeit hat die wichtige heuristische Funktion, das Interesse und das Durchsetzungsvermögen für einen solchen Anspruch zu postulieren, nicht aber die Aufgabe, fertige Kulturmodelle zu liefern.[181]

With regard to the direction feminist rhetoric should take, both Silvia Bovenschen and Sigrid Weigel recognise the dilemma facing writers, since there is, as yet, no clearly defined or accepted theory along these lines. There are, it seems, two possible extremes, either "Vergangenheitsverarbeitung," or the introduction of a new beginning, with utopian perspectives. Sigrid Weigel believes that "only a dialectical understanding of the relationship between historical conditions and utopian perspectives, between the 'no longer' and the 'not yet' can resolve this conflict."[182] It would seem, however, on the basis of the evidence provided by the four representative texts considered in this analysis, that, in a way, many writers are avoiding the conflict altogether, in choosing a present perspective, dealing with the current "Alltag der Frauen,"[183] and concentrating on specifically female emotions within that contemporary framework.

It is interesting that a comment which was applied to the Günter Grass novel *Kopfgeburten: oder, Die Deutschen sterben aus* by a critic in *The New York Times Book Review* goes a long way towards summarising the literary production of many feminist writers. This text was classed as "Part fiction, part travelogue, part screenplay, and part political pamphlet," - and the similarities between this description and the effects, observed so far, of the chosen examples of *Frauenliteratur* are noticeable. On the one hand, the similarities are a result of the narrative tense, since, as stated earlier, the usual tense for film-script directions and essays is the present, and on the other hand, *Frauenliteratur* is by its very nature politically engaged.[184]

---

[181] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[182] Weigel, p. 54.
[183] Wartmann, p. 114.
[184] See note no.5.

It is, however, important to observe that there is, nonetheless, a vital difference between feminist literary production and a work such as *Kopfgeburten*, for in *Frauenliteratur* the political aspects of the texts are, for the most part, focused purely on the situations and difficulties of women. The perspective from which we view society is completely reversed, when compared with the majority of male literature, since here, at last, we are receiving a genuine feminine awareness, and not only that, we are not observing the accompanying problems, fears and injustices from afar, but instead we are able to experience the thoughts and emotions of a particular woman in the patriarchy along with her in a very direct fashion.

Having discovered and illustrated the existence of certain definable linguistic traits, which appear to contribute to the formation of the physiognomy peculiar to *Frauenliteratur*, one ought to apply these findings to the far-reaching realm of the inter-relation between consciousness, language, and reality, in order to ascertain whether the existing phenomena are an indication of an innately different feminine linguistic style, or simply the result of the influence of reality on language.

The Whorfian hypothesis in this respect, mentioned earlier, which states that the structure of the language one habitually uses influences one's understanding of the environment, is no doubt valid to a certain extent. Whorf was, however, concerned with a comparison of two completely separate and self-contained sets of linguistic structures. Whereas this study has considered a more intricate problem, namely, the attempt by a certain group to alter linguistic structures from within a particular social reality. This presents additional complications, for it implies that the existing female perception of reality is not yet truly feminine, since true feminine awareness has been denied expression during the course of patriarchal history.

The attempts by feminist writers to change reality via language do, however, indicate the validity of Whorf's belief, since this approach is based on the assumption that the current structure-system plays an integral role in shaping social patterns. Yet, it should also be noted, that this approach has been brought about as a result of the negative influence exerted by

reality on this group, and the adaptations of language are a reaction to that. It therefore seems fair to conclude that we are seeing the result of reality's influence on language in these changes, but that the hope expressed by writers and theoreticians of affecting reality via new linguistic structures is indicative of the fact that there is, it seems, a reciprocal influence between language and reality. Whether the new structures will in fact influence reality and improve the situation of women in the patriarchy remains to be seen.

As a result of the many variable influences on these developments, it is so far not possible to definitively conclude that specifically feminine linguistic structures are manifesting themselves in feminist literature. At this stage we can only attempt to elucidate the differences in style by proving the existence of specific phenomena common to the genre, since going beyond this would inevitably lead to some fundamental, but as yet unanswered, linguistic-philosophical questions.

6. Bibliography

6.1 Primary Literature

Drewitz, Ingeborg. *Das Hochhaus*. München: Goldmann Verlag, 1983.

----------. *Eis auf der Elbe*. Düsseldorf: Claassen Verlag, 1982.

----------. *Gestern war Heute. Hundert Jahre Gegenwart*. Düsseldorf: Claassen Verlag, 1978.

Grass, Günter. *Kopfgeburten: oder, Die Deutschen sterben aus*. Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1980.

Schroeder, Margot. *Der Schlachter empfiehlt noch immer Herz*. München: Frauenbuchverlag, 1976.

Schwaiger, Brigitte. *Lange Abwesenheit*. Wien: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1980.

----------. *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979.

Stefan, Verena. *Häutungen. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen, Gedichte, Träume, Analysen*. 20th ed. München: Verlag Frauenoffensive, 1984.

Struck, Karin. *Klassenliebe*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973.

Zeller, Eva. *Die Hauptfrau*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1977.

6.2 Secondary Literature

Adorno, Theodor W. "Standort des Erzählers im zeitgenössischen Roman." In *Positionen des Erzählens: Analysen und Theorien zur Literatur der Bundesrepublik*. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold and Theo Buck. München: C. H. Beck, 1976, pp. 9-14.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *Le Deuxième Sexe*. 2 vols. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1949.

Beck, Evelyn Torton, and Biddy Martin. "Westdeutsche Frauenliteratur der siebziger Jahre." In *Deutsche Literatur in der Bundesrepublik seit 1965*. Ed. Paul Michael Lützeler and Egon Schwarz. Königstein/Ts: Athenäum Verlag, 1980, pp. 135-49.

Blau DuPlessis, Rachel. *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Bloch, P. A., ed. *Der Schriftsteller und sein Verhältnis zur Sprache, dargestellt am Problem der Tempuswahl*. Bern: Francke Verlag, 1971.

Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. 6th ed. Chicago: University Press, 1966.

Bovenschen, Silvia. *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit: Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979.

----------. "Über die Frage: Gibt es eine weibliche Ästhetik?" *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, 25 (September, 1976), pp. 60-75. Rpt. in *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit: Texte aus der neuen Frauenbewegung*. Ed. Gabriele Dietze. Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1979, pp. 82-115.

Brug, Gudrun, and Saskia Hoffmann-Steltzer. "Fragen an Verena Stefan." *alternative*, 108/109 (June/August 1976), pp. 121-3.

Cella, Ingrid. "Das 'Rätsel Weib' und die Literatur. Feminismus, feministische Ästhetik und die neue Frauenliteratur in Österreich." In *Studien zur österreichischen Erzählliteratur der Gegenwart. Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*, Band 14. Ed. Herbert Zeman. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982, pp. 189-228.

Cixous, Hélène. "Schreiben, Feminität, Veränderung." *alternative*, 108/109 (June/August 1976), pp. 134-47.

Classen, Brigitte, and Gabriele Goettle. "*Häutungen*, eine Verwechslung von Anemone und Amazone." In *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit: Texte aus der neuen Frauenbewegung*. Ed. Gabriele Dietze. Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1979, pp. 55-9.

Clausen, Jeanette. "Our Language, Our Selves: Verena Stefan's Critique of Patriarchal Language." In *Beyond the Eternal Feminine: Critical Essays on Women and German Literature*. Ed. Susan L. Cocalis and Kay Goodman. Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1982, pp. 381-400.

----------. "The Difficulty of Saying 'I' as Theme and Narrative Technique in the Works of

Christa Wolf." In *Gestaltet und Gestaltend. Frauen in der deutschen Literatur. Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*, Band 10. Ed. Marianne Burkhard. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980, pp. 319-33.

Cohn, Dorrit. Rev. of *Die Logik der Dichtung*, by Käte Hamburger. *Germanic Review*, 45 (1970), pp. 65-7.

----------. *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Dietze, Gabriele, ed. *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit: Texte aus der neuen Frauenbewegung*. Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1979.

Drewitz, Ingeborg. "Eva Zeller: *Die Hauptfrau.*" *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, 24 (1977), pp. 824-5.

----------. *Zeitverdichtung: Essays Kritiken Portraits. Gesammelt aus zwei Jahrzehnten.* Wien: Europaverlag, 1980.

Ezergailis, Inta. *Women Writers. The Divided Self.* Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1982.

Farrell, Thomas J. "The Female and Male Modes of Rhetoric." *College English*, 40, No.8 (April 1979), pp. 909-21.

Frederiksen, Elke. "Verena Stefan." In *Neue Literatur der Frauen. Deutschsprachige Autorinnen der Gegenwart*. München: C. H. Beck, 1980, pp. 208-213.

Gipper, Helmut. *Gibt es ein sprachliches Relativitätsprinzip? Untersuchungen zur Sapir-Whorf-Hypothese*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1972.

Goettle, Gabriele. "Schleim oder Nichtschleim, das ist hier die Frage." In *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit: Texte aus der neuen Frauenbewegung*. Ed. Gabriele Dietze. Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1979, pp. 51-4.

Gölter, Waltraud. "Zukunftssüchtige Erinnerungen. Aspekte weiblichen Schreibens." *Psyche*, 37 (1983), pp. 642-68.

Hamburger, Käte. "Das epische Präteritum." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 27 (1953), pp. 329-57.

----------. *Die Logik der Dichtung*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1968.

----------. "Die Zeitlosigkeit der Dichtung." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 29 (1955), 413-26.

----------. "Noch einmal: Vom Erzählen. Versuch einer Antwort und Klärung." *Euphorion*, 59 (1965), pp. 46-71.

Häussermann, Titus, ed. *Ingeborg Drewitz. Materialien zu Werk und Wirken: Unter Mitarbeit von Christa Melchinger und Bernhard Drewitz*. Stuttgart: Radius-Verlag, 1983.

Hildebrandt, Irma. *Vom Eintritt der Frau in die Literatur: schreibend das Leben bewältigen*. München: Profil-Verlag, 1983.

Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.

----------. *Waren, Körper, Sprache. Der ver-rückte Diskurs der Frauen*. Trans. Eva Meyer und Heidi Paris. Berlin: Merve-Verlag, 1976.

Keitel, Evelyne. "Frauen Texte Theorie. Aspekte eines problematischen Verhältnisses." *Das Argument*, 25 (1983), pp. 830-41.

Kolkenbrock-Netz, Jutta and Marianne Schuller. "Frau im Spiegel. Zum Verhältnis von autobiographischer Schreibweise und feministischer Praxis." In *Entwürfe von Frauen in der Literatur des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Irmela von der Lühe. Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1982, pp. 154-74.

Koller, Christine. "Ingeborg Drewitz: *Das Hochhaus*." *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, 23 (1976), pp. 825-7.

Krechel, Ursula. "Leben in Anführungszeichen. Das Authentische in der gegenwärtigen Literatur." In *Literaturmagazin 11. Schreiben oder Literatur*. Ed. Jürgen Manthey. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979, pp. 80-107.

Krüger, Michael and Klaus Wagenbach, eds. *Tintenfisch 8. Jahrbuch für Literatur*. Berlin: Wagenbach, 1975.

Lenk, Elisabeth. "Die sich selbst verdoppelnde Frau." *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, 25 (September 1976), pp. 84-87.

Love, Myra. "Christa Wolf and Feminism: Breaking the Patriarchal Connection." *New German Critique*, 16 (Winter 1979), pp. 31-53.

Möhrmann, Renate. "Feministische Trends in der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur." In *Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur. Ausgangspositionen und aktuelle Entwicklungen*. Ed. Manfred Durzak. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981, pp. 336-58.

Pascal, Roy. *Kafka's Narrators: A Study of his Stories and Sketches*. Ed. Leonard Forster, M. Swales and A. T. Hatto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

----------. "Tense and Novel." *The Modern Language Review*, 57 (1962), pp. 1-11.

Patterson Tubach, Sally. "Verena Stefan's *Häutungen*: Homoeroticism and Feminism." In *Beyond the Eternal Feminine: Critical Essays on Women and German Literature*. Ed. Susan L. Cocalis and Kay Goodman. Stuttgart, Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1982, pp. 351-80.

Petersen, Karin. "'Essen vom Baum der Erkenntnis' - Weibliche Kreativität?" In *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit: Texte aus der neuen Frauenbewegung*. Ed. Gabriele Dietze. Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1979, pp. 70-81.

Puknus, Heinz, ed. *Neue Literatur der Frauen. Deutschsprachige Autorinnen der Gegenwart*. München: C. H. Beck, 1980.

----------. "Zur Geschichte der neuen Literatur der Frauen. Nachwort des Herausgebers." In *Neue Literatur der Frauen. Deutschsprachige Autorinnen der Gegenwart*. München: C. H. Beck, 1980, pp. 255-68.

Pusch, Luise F. *Das Deutsche als Männersprache*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984.

Rich, Adrienne Cecile. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1976.

Robbe-Grillet, Alain. *Pour un nouveau roman*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1963.

Rumler, Fritz. "Patriarch grollt." *Der Spiegel*, 25.4.1977.

Schmidt, Jochen. "Wie ägyptische Mumien: *Das Hochhaus*, ein Roman von Ingeborg Drewitz." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18.10.1975.

Schmidt, Ricarda. *Westdeutsche Frauenliteratur in den siebziger Jahren*. Frankfurt am Main: R. G. Fischer, 1982.

Schmölzer, Hilde. *Frau sein und schreiben. Osterreichische Schriftstellerinnen definieren sich selbst*. Wien: Osterreichischer Bundesverlag, 1982.

Schober, Wolfgang Heinz. *Erzähltechniken in Romanen: Eine Untersuchung erzähltechnischer Probleme in zeitgenössischen deutschen Romanen*. Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1975.

Schwarzer, Alice. *Der 'kleine Unterschied' und seine grossen Folgen. Frauen über sich. Beginn einer Befreiung*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1975.

----------. *Frauen gegen den Paragraphen 218. 18 Protokolle, aufgezeichnet von Alice Schwarzer*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971.

Seidler, Herbert. "Dichterische Welt und epische Zeitgestaltung." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 29 (1955), pp. 390-413.

Spencer, Sharon. *Space, Time and Structure in the Modern Novel*. New York: New York University Press, 1971.

Stanley, Julia Penelope and Susan J. Wolfe (Robbins). "Toward a Feminist Aesthetik." *Chrysalis: A Magazine of Women's Culture*, 6 (1978), pp. 57-71.

Stanzel, Frank K. "Episches Präteritum, erlebte Rede, historisches Präsens." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 33 (1959), pp. 1-12.

Strodthoff, Werner. "Vereinzelung in der Stadt als verfehltes Thema: Ingeborg Drewitz' Roman *Das Hochhaus*." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 30.1.1976.

Stumm, Reinhardt. "'Irgendwann fiel der Motor aus', Brigitte Schwaigers Roman: *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*." *Die Zeit*, 1.4.1977.

Swiatlowski, Zbigniew. "Frauenliteratur: Entwurf einer neuen Sensibilität." *Text und Kontext*, 10 (1982), pp. 107-30.

Szanto, George H. *Narrative Consciousness: Structure and Perception in the Fiction of Kafka, Beckett, and Robbe-Grillet*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972.

Tempel, Ute. "Wie können frauen als 'menschen' schreiben?" *mamas pfirsiche - frauen und literatur*, 4/5 (1977), pp. 31-43.

Trömel-Plötz, Senta. *Fräuensprache - Sprache der Veränderung*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1982.

----------, ed. *Gewalt durch Sprache. Die Vergewaltigung von Frauen in Gesprächen*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984.

Ullrich, Gisela. "Ingeborg Drewitz." In *Kritisches Lexikon der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*. Band 2. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. München: Edition Text & Kritik, 1978.

Wartmann, Brigitte. "Schreiben als Angriff auf das Patriarchat." In *Literaturmagazin 11. Schreiben oder Literatur*. Ed. Jürgen Manthey. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979, pp. 108-132.

Weigel, Sigrid. "'Woman Begins Relating to Herself': Contemporary German Women's Literature." Trans. Luke Springman. *New German Critique*, 31 (Winter 1984), pp. 53-94.

----------. "Overcoming absence: Contemporary German Women's Literature." Trans. Amy Kepple. *New German Critique*, pp. 3-22.

Weingant, Liselotte. "Das Bild des Mannes im Frauenroman der siebziger Jahre." Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1981.

Weinrich, Harald. *Tempus. Besprochene und erzählte Welt*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1971.

----------. "Tempusprobleme eines Leitartikels." *Euphorion*, 60 (1966), pp. 263-72.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. *Language, Thought, and Reality*. Ed. John B. Carroll. 4th ed. Massachusetts: Institute of Technology, 1959.

Wien, Werner. "Nur die Kinder proben hier die Gemeinschaft. Ingeborg Drewitz' Roman '*Das Hochhaus*' schildert detailliert neues Berliner Milieu." *Bremer Nachrichten*, 16.1.1976.

Wolfe (Robbins), Susan J. "Stylistic Experimentation in Millet, Johnston, and Wittig." Presented at the Modern Language Association, New York City, December 27-30, 1978.

Wolfschütz, Hans. "Brigitte Schwaiger." In *Kritisches Lexikon der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*. Band 4. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. München: Edition Text & Kritik, 1978.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. 1929; rpt. London: Grafton Books, 1985.

Zutshi, Margot E. *Literary Theory in Germany: A Study of Genre and Evaluation Theories 1945-1965*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1981.